

The Law in the Book of Galatians

ESR

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**IS IT THE MORAL LAW, OR DOES IT REFER TO THAT SYSTEM
OF LAWS
PECULIARLY JEWISH?**

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INTRODUCTION

What law is the *principle* subject of the apostle's discourse in the epistle to the Galatians? Is it the moral law? or the typical remedial system and laws peculiarly Jewish? Perhaps there has never been a theological question in all the history of our work concerning which there has been so much disagreement among our ministry and leading brethren as this. Such differences have existed more or less with varying phases, since the rise of the message, and at times have been discussed with more or less warmth. At other periods they have been tacitly left untouched. Generally, a mutual forbearance has been exercised, so that bitterness of feeling between brethren has been avoided.*LBG 3.1*

Leading brethren have been on both sides of the question. In the early history of the work, it is probable that quite a majority of them accepted the view that the moral law was the main subject of Paul's consideration in the book of Galatians. But there came quite a change in this respect at a later period, when some of our leading brethren, to whom our people have ever looked as safe counselors in questions of perplexity, gave up the view that the moral law was mainly under discussion, and took the position that it was the ceremonial law. Many others who have come later to act a part in the work, have accepted the latter view with strong confidence. It would be quite difficult to ascertain the comparative strength in numbers on either side; but to the best of the writer's judgment (and his opportunities of forming a fair opinion have not been meager), he would say that at the present time at least two thirds of our ministers hold the latter opinion.*LBG 3.2*

For half a score of years past, the question has lain quite dormant. Not that either of the classes referred to have changed their opinion. By no means. But there has seemed to be an avoidance of the question quite largely, and a desire to spare the feelings of those holding an opposite view as much as possible; so that the law in Galatians has not been dwelt upon in articles coming before the public through our periodicals and publications as much as it otherwise would have been.*LBG 3.3*

We say this has been the case quite largely until within a

comparatively brief time. But the writer acknowledges considerable surprise that during the last year or two the subject has been made quite prominent in the instructions given to those at Healdsburg College preparing to labor in the cause; also in the lessons passing through the *Instructor*, designed for our Sabbath-schools all over the land, and in numerous argumentative articles in the *Signs of the Times*, our pioneer missionary paper, thus throwing these views largely before the reading public not acquainted with our faith. Thus, strong and repeated efforts have been made to sustain the view that the moral law is the subject of the apostle's discourse in the most prominent texts under discussion in the letter to the Galatians.*LBG 4.1*

Now we are not disposed to find fault with the spirit in which the articles are written, or to say that the matter has not been managed ably on the part of those engaged in it. Indeed, we are free to admit a keen perception, yea, a degree of admiration, of the tact and ability displayed in bringing this controverted question of long standing, held in abeyance for a time, before our people in the manner mentioned. It shows a degree of shrewdness in planning to carry the views of the writers and actors which, if exerted in a better way, might be truly commendable.*LBG 4.2*

But we decidedly protest against the bringing out of controverted views in the manner indicated, concerning matters upon which our people are not agreed. It violates a principle well understood in the practice of this body, which has usually been regarded with respect. It has been taught by high authority that where such differences exist, at least on the side of a minority, they should either be held without giving them much publicity, or be brought before our leading brethren and acted upon by them. Then it would be time to publish them, and not before.*LBG 4.3*

But even if it were thought consistent to publish controverted views to a reasonable degree, we should still protest against doing it in the manner mentioned. It seems very objectionable to us, to urgently teach views not held by a majority of our leading brethren, to our college students who are preparing to go out and labor in the cause. We do not believe our denominational institutions of learning were established for any such purpose. Our work has been noted

for unity; but unity will not be increased by such methods. There are plenty of things which can be taught without going into controverted fields. We conceive that the fact that such differences have been made prominent in teaching these young minds, must tend to give them a less favorable impression of the character of our work than if an effort had been made to make our differences as small as possible.*LBG 4.4*

So of the lessons going through the *Instructor*, in which those points have been presented. To our personal knowledge, and from the reports of leading ministers, in many places throughout the field a great amount of argument and controversy has been indulged in over this question of the law in Galatians, often with heat and contention. When such positions are taken on controverted points, the fact that they are published in our denominational journals, and hence are believed to be the views of *all* our people, leaves an unjust impression in the minds of those who study the lessons, concerning the larger number of those in the cause who hold opposite views. It is taking an unfair advantage. Our Sabbath-school lessons should teach *only* views held by the large body of our people.*LBG 5.1*

The same principle applies to articles published in our pioneer paper. They should represent only the views of the body, and not ventilate views held by any writer, however strongly he may hold them, when he knows they are not the views of the body, or the principal portion of our people. To pursue the opposite course would be far more objectionable in our pioneer paper than in the *Review*, the organ of the church. The former was established by our people as an agency through which to introduce our views to the public, who are supposed to be unacquainted with them. Every one would have the strongest reason to suppose that articles coming from the pioneer paper of the denomination, established by the church to teach its special views, were indorsed by the body. But such is not the case with the articles in question. The application of texts in Galatians quoted and commented upon in the *Signs*, is not the opinion of the body or a majority of our people, and has not been for years; and those writing them certainly ought to know this. The *Signs* is a paper with a large circulation. It comes under the observation of many of our ablest opponents. By this course of the

managers of the *Signs*, they must become aware of the fact that there is a difference in our public teaching upon this subject; and they will doubtless use such knowledge to our detriment. Indeed, I have known it to be done years in the past by an able disputant in a debate in Iowa, who brought out the fact that we teach differently on this subject.*LBG 5.2*

We claim to be a united people, and to teach but one doctrine. It has been a great cause of regret for years among our best brethren that this difference of opinion exists among us; and the course of the *Signs* must tend to make this difference far more prominent than it ever has been before; and many outside of our ranks will become acquainted with the fact who never would have known it had not the editors of the *Signs* repeatedly pressed their views of this subject through, its columns. Whatever may be, the opinion entertained concerning this subject of the law in Galatians, it seems to the writer there can be but one opinion among the careful, thoughtful believers concerning the propriety of publishing in our pioneer paper doctrines not generally held by the large majority of our people.*LBG 6.1*

Believing strongly, as we do, that the law principally considered in Galatians is the typical remedial system, which passed away at the cross, and is *not* the moral law, and feeling that an unfair advantage has been taken in urgently teaching the contrary opinion to our young people preparing to labor in the cause, and in making our *Instructor* lessons and pioneer paper mediums for teaching an opposite view, and hoping to add some information which will be valuable upon the subject, we have felt it not only proper but a duty to bring the subject before the General Conference of our people, the only tribunal in our body where such controverted questions can be properly considered and passed upon.*LBG 6.2*

THE SUBJECT CONSIDERED

The question before us is one of interpretation. In the brief letter of the apostle Paul to the Galatian church, we have at the commencement some historical facts given concerning himself and his apostleship, and an argument concerning “the law,” and in the latter part, practical instruction concerning various Christian duties. Running all through the epistle are expressions in which the apostle finds fault with them for their course of conduct after he left them, caused by Jewish teachers who had led them astray, so that they had really taken positions contrary to the gospel of Christ. In these censures the apostle makes constant reference to some law concerning which the Galatians had taken a wrong position. As a people, we believe that there are two laws, or systems of law: (1.) The moral law and the principles of moral duty which grow out of it; (2.) The ceremonial law, embracing the typical remedial system pointing forward to Christ, and the civil laws growing out of the special relation existing between God and the Jewish people to the cross. We hold the former to be ever binding upon man, while the latter passed away.*LBG 7.1*

Our inquiry is now as to which of these laws the apostle has principally in view in the letter to the Galatians. The question is an important one, and is therefore well worthy of consideration. Truth, for its own sake, is important concerning the meaning and application of any scripture; and the truth concerning the law in Galatians is especially so, because the apostle’s references to the law in this letter are used by our opponents as a strong support to their Antinomian doctrines. It is evident that the position which is a truthful exposition of the apostle’s argument is in every way preferable, and will be easier to defend than one which is erroneous. It will enable us to meet our opponents more successfully, and thus the great system of truth which we hold will be strengthened. All our people ought to greatly desire that we come to a unity of position on this subject.*LBG 7.2*

We hold that the letter to the Galatians was written to meet one of the greatest difficulties with which the gospel had to contend in the apostle’s days. This difficulty was the opposition of Judaizing teachers and disciples who still taught the obligation of the

ceremonial law, and of circumcision and those laws connected with it which served to separate between Jews and Gentiles. These confused the minds of the disciples, and obscured the great principles of the gospel, virtually destroying it. We find constant reference to the work of this class of teachers in Paul's writings and in the Acts of the Apostles, as we shall see. Indeed, it may well be doubted whether a large portion of the early church who were Jews before conversion ever fully realized the scope and extent of the gospel in setting aside those laws peculiarly Jewish. They clung to them, and were zealous for them long after they were abolished at the cross. To Paul we are in debt, through the blessing of God, for the only full explanation of the proper relation of these laws to the plan of salvation and the gospel; and he himself was looked upon with great suspicion by many of the Hebrew converts, because he plainly taught the abrogation of many things which they continued to hold sacred.*LBG 7.3*

Nor is this to be wondered at when we take a view of the past history of that people, and the special influences which had been at work for fifteen centuries. We cannot well realize the peculiar circumstances surrounding the early church, and the special influences with which they had to contend, without looking at the causes which led to them. We will briefly notice these. Because the mass of mankind had gone into idolatry, and utterly apostatized from God, the Lord chose Abraham and his descendants to be his peculiar people. They were such till the cross. He gave them the rite of circumcision-a circle cut in the flesh-as a sign of their separation from the rest of the human family. In process of time, after special experiences and training, he gave them a land peculiarly their own, and built about them, by special laws, ordinances, rites, and services, a wall of separation, which has made them a distinct people even to the present day. The sign of circumcision to the Jew implied and embraced all this. It was the one rite which separated the Jews from the Gentile world. This is shown by the fact that any Gentile could become a proselyte, and be entitled to all the privileges of the nation, by being circumcised and uniting with them. Without this, in the old economy no man could come under the provisions of salvation; with it, all the hopes, promises, covenants, laws, light, and privileges of the Israelite were his. Hence circumcision implies all those privileges specially Jewish. The term

was used in this well-understood sense. The circumcised were God's peculiar people. The uncircumcised were all the rest of the world. Hence for a man to drop circumcision was really to cast aside all the peculiar blessings and privileges of the Jews, and to lower himself to a level with the rest of the world he so much despised; while to maintain it, was to maintain all his supposed superiority. Hence we see what was involved in the controversies over circumcision in the early gospel church.*LBG 8.1*

Should we inquire into the reasons why God thus separated the descendants of Abraham from the rest of the world, as the rite of circumcision implied, we may readily discover them. Every effort of the Almighty to maintain a pure people in the earth had in length of time seemed to fail. At the flood all had gone astray save Noah and his family, and the destruction of the mass of the race thus became necessary in order to start anew. Another great defection made the destruction of the cities of the plain necessary. Scarce any but Abraham remained true to their allegiance in his time. So God now adopts a more effectual method. He takes the painful rite of circumcision as a separating sign, and builds a wall around his people, protecting them in a measure from the inundation of evil coming from the outer heathen world, thus preserving a seed, a church, till Messiah should come and inaugurate a more effective system with which to bless mankind. The object was noble, and such as was worthy of a wise, benevolent Creator.*LBG 9.1*

This people, thus protected, were made the recipients of numberless blessings. God intrusted to them his holy law, with his holy Sabbath,—inestimable blessings!— which gave them an infinitely clearer view of moral duty than was possessed by the most enlightened nations around them. He made rich provisions for their temporal good in the fertile country bestowed upon them. Had they been obedient, he would have made them the highest of the nations. He gave them rich promises, instructed them by holy prophets, and caused the Messiah to be made manifest through their race. They were indeed a most favored nation.*LBG 9.2*

But these great blessings, which should have made Israel a humble, grateful people, full of love to God, they perverted, and became proud, boastful, supercilious, stiff-necked, and selfish,

looking down upon all others, and feeling that they were the only ones God regarded. They filled up the measure of their iniquity by crucifying their long-promised Messiah. So selfish were they that they could not appreciate the spirit of love to all, which so overflowed from his precious life.*LBG 10.1*

Then came the cross, when all their special privileges, with circumcision as their representative and sign, were swept away. They had forfeited them by disobedience and rebellion. The time and event, the limit to which they reached, had come. Their iniquity, in view of the light they had received, was even greater than that of the nations around them. There was no propriety, therefore, in still keeping up the wall of separation between them and others. They all stood now upon the same level in the sight of God. All must approach him through the Messiah who had come into the world; through him alone man could be saved.*LBG 10.2*

But did the Jews take kindly to this new order of things?—Far from it. The thing that maddened them most of all was the intimation that their special privileges were taken away. These had served to exalt them in their own eyes, and they had used them for ages to exalt themselves above others. They had been very zealous in proselyting among the nations because of this superiority. And now to have this lowly Nazarene and his poor, despised followers, who had never been honored as learned or talented, place them on the same level with others, was like destroying their whole stock in trade. Their sacred privileges and special blessings were the only things they had to boast of. They were oppressed by the Romans, and despised by the Greeks as being ignorant of philosophy, and not generally liked by the nations because of their pride and vain glory. To take away their only claim of being God's peculiar people was more than they could endure.*LBG 10.3*

Their hatred was especially bitter against the apostle Paul, because he, more than any other, clearly defined and demonstrated this fact. He was the apostle to the Gentiles, which made it necessary for him to make this fact prominent. He pointed them to Christ as their only hope. They had nothing to gain from circumcision and the special privileges it represented. Hence we see the Judaizing teachers representing the various sects of zealots among the Jews and the

Hebrew disciples who were not willing to accept the truth as Paul taught it, opposing him, following him from city to city, persecuting and in many instances trying to kill him. They were exceedingly zealous for circumcision and the law of the fathers. The hardest battle the great apostle had to fight was upon this very ground.*LBG 10.4*

There were really two leading questions which required special attention as the gospel went among the Gentiles beyond the confines of Judaism. The special circumstances that had surrounded the Jewish people for ages in the past, made these questions prominent, now that the new order of things was introduced, and Jews and Gentiles stood alike upon the same basis. One was the binding claims of the law of God upon all mankind, and the special fact connected with it that the Jews were condemned by that law as sinners, and hence needed a Saviour just as much as others. The other was the fact already referred to—the cessation at the cross, of the types and services pointing to Christ, with the special privileges granted to Israel as God’s peculiar people, symbolized by circumcision. Until these positions were well understood, and the great principles growing out of them were thoroughly comprehended, the gospel could never accomplish its destined work in the world; the Christian system would be in disorder and confusion. For Jew and Gentile alike to have a Saviour, both alike must be sinners. Thus both could come into one brotherhood, and constitute one family. But this could not be if this middle wall still stood as a separation between them. Hence it must be thoroughly understood that this was broken down.*LBG 11.1*

Both of these facts were unpalatable to the Jew. He greatly disliked to be reckoned a common sinner with the hated Gentile. He strenuously contended also for circumcision and its attendant privileges. Hence it was necessary that both of these great facts should be faithfully developed, and the underlying reasons given for this new arrangement. Paul was the man specially raised up of God to do this work.*LBG 11.2*

We shall claim that in the epistle to the Romans he fully considers the former question, and in the letter to the Galatians, the latter. We cannot agree with some who claim that the design, scheme, or

argument in the two epistles are substantially the same. We freely admit that there are expressions alike in both; but we believe that the main line of argument and the ultimate object in view are widely different, and that many of the similar expressions used are to be understood in a different sense, because the argument of the apostle demands it.*LBG 12.1*

In the other epistles of Paul these facts are adverted to; but in none of them is the argument anywhere near so fully developed. It does not look reasonable on the face of it that the apostle would have principally the same object in view in two different epistles. These were written by direct inspiration of God, to be the special guidance of the Christian church. He was bringing out the great principles which should serve as the governing influence of the church for all future ages. We therefore believe it to be an unreasonable view that both have the same design.*LBG 12.2*

In the epistle to the Romans, after a few preliminary remarks, Paul sets before us the condition of the heathen world, and how they came to forget God, and their terrible degradation. They certainly needed a Saviour. Yet they were amenable to the law of God; for it had originally been “written in the heart” at creation, and some remnant of the work of it still remained.*LBG 12.3*

But the Jews had a great advantage, inasmuch as the “living oracles” were directly placed in their keeping. They had constant access to them, but had as constantly transgressed them. The apostle plainly proved all of them to be under sin. All had gone astray. None did good, no not one. He concludes: “What then? are we [Jews] better than they?—No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.” Every mouth was stopped, and all the world became guilty before God. The law was not “made void,” but “established.”*LBG 12.4*

The apostle proceeds in a most lucid and powerful argument to show the agency of the moral law in the plan of salvation in all its various relations to the sinner; the necessity of faith in Christ in order that the law-breaker may be justified; its agency in the death of the old carnal man; and its necessity as a standard of right-doing which the repentant sinner alone can reach by the assistance of

Christ through the Holy Spirit. To the Epistle to the Romans we ever look for the most complete and thorough exposition of the law of God in its relation to the plan of salvation and the ultimate justification of the repentant transgressor of it.*LBG 12.5*

But is the scheme of the letter to the Galatians the same? Does the apostle have in view the same object? We think he had a widely different end in view. Instead of trying to impress upon Jew and Gentile alike the obligation of the moral law as his main object, he has constantly in view a class of Judaizing teachers who had troubled the disciples, and introduced doctrines which subverted the principles of the gospel. The believers had been turned away from the faith by these teachings, to “another gospel.” They had loved the great apostle when they first received the truth, with a fervency which would have prompted them to pluck out their eyes for him; but through the influence of these disturbing teachers, that love had been almost lost. Paul was greatly grieved at this sudden change in their feelings and views. Throughout the whole epistle he constantly refers to it, reproaching them for their sudden change, and appealing to them to return to their former position.*LBG 13.1*

What was the change in them of which he complains so strongly? Was it that they had kept the moral law so well—had observed the Sabbath, refrained from idolatry, blasphemy, murder, lying, stealing, etc.—that they felt they were justified by their good works, and therefore needed no faith in a crucified Saviour? or was it that they had accepted circumcision, with all it implied and symbolized, the laws and services which served as a wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles, and the ordinances of the typical remedial system? We unhesitatingly affirm it was the latter. In indorsing the former remedial system of types and shadows, they virtually denied that Christ, the substance to which all these types pointed, had come. Hence the error was a fundamental one in doctrine, though they might not realize it. This was why Paul spoke so forcibly, and pointed out their error with such strength of language. Their error involved *practices* which were subversive of the principles of the gospel. They were not merely errors of opinion.*LBG 13.2*

Let us notice a few expressions of the apostle, scattered through Galatians, before we come to an examination of the epistle itself.

This will serve to bring out the point more clearly:—*LBG 14.1*

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.” *Chap. 1:6.LBG 14.2*

“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?” *Chap. 3:1.LBG 14.3*

“But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” *LBG 14.4*

“I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.” *Chap. 4:9, 11.LBG 14.5*

“Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.” *Chap. 5:2, 3.*
“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” *Verse 7.LBG 14.6*

“As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.” *Chap. 6:12.LBG 14.7*

It will be noticed that these texts are selected all through the epistle. Many others of similar import could also be given. They relate to the principal theme in the apostle’s mind which caused him to write this letter to the Galatians. He had one leading object in view; hence he is constantly referring to it. The errors in the Galatian church which Paul was so vigorously combating, were *not* merely the theoretical view that they were justified by their obedience to the moral law and hence needed not a Saviour; but they were *practices* which really undermined the truth of the gospel, connecting it with circumcision, the symbol of all those laws peculiarly Jewish.*LBG 14.8*

We do not here quote these texts to make an argument upon them. We reserve them for their proper connection when we examine the epistle point by point. We present them now as an illustration of what was specially occupying the apostle’s thoughts from one end of the epistle to the other. He apparently could not keep out of his

mind the fundamental errors into which these children in the faith were fallen. These errors of doctrine he had to meet wherever he met a Jew. Throughout his whole Christian life he had to fight them. Because of the bitterness of feeling entertained by the Jews in sustaining their claims to superiority because of these separating laws involved in circumcision, Paul had to endure whippings, imprisonment, insult, hatred, a long captivity, and, worst of all, see multitudes of those he desired to save, of his own kinsmen according to the flesh, lost forever. Their ears were closed against him and the precious gospel he preached. He would willingly have died to save them; but their ears were closed against the gospel because he could not sustain those separating laws which served as a line of demarcation between the Jew and the Gentile. This question with Paul, therefore, was a *live question*, one ever before him. Hence all through the book of Galatians it is constantly brought to view. Circumcision and the remedial system connected with the old dispensation are constantly in his mind from the commencement in the first chapter till his close in the last.*LBG 14.9*

There are, no doubt, several references to the moral law in the epistle. Indeed, we do not see how it could well be otherwise while discussing a remedial system providing pardon in figure for violation of that law. In some places the apostle uses arguments which will embrace that and all systems of law, and which may and do refer to and include both. But we emphatically deny that the law of God is the leading subject under consideration in this letter. We now propose to examine the whole epistle consecutively, having a relation to this subject. To enable the reader to easily follow us, we will quote the language of the apostle.*LBG 15.1*

Chapter 1:1: "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)*LBG 15.2*

"2. And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:*LBG 15.3*

"3. Grace be you, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,*LBG 15.4*

"4. Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this

present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:*LBG 15.5*

“5. To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*LBG 16.1*

“6. I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:*LBG 16.2*

“7. Which is not another; but there be some that, trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.*LBG 16.3*

“8. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*LBG 16.4*

“9. As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”*LBG 16.5*

These are the introductory words of the epistle. In the parenthetical clause in *verse 1*, Paul especially refers to his call to the apostleship, which was high and honorable. It placed him on an equality of authority with any of the other apostles. Indeed, his call was more especially marked by divine manifestations than any of them, indicating, perhaps, God's choice of him for the most important work. He dwells upon this in other places in this letter, because there was a disposition on the part of the Judaizing element to underrate the apostle, and exalt those whose special sphere of labor was among the Jews, and who had never taken such strong ground as Paul had in showing that all national distinctions were gone. Paul gives them to understand that he is fully prepared by God's appointment to instruct them in the gospel.*LBG 16.6*

Before he has proceeded a dozen lines in his introduction, Paul bursts out in strong language concerning the great theme which was in his mind. “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you ...unto another gospel.” “There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel pf Christ.” If angel or man “preach any other gospel, ... let him be accursed.” And to make it doubly emphatic, he repeats this last statement. To be “accursed” is

to be “doomed to destruction.” It is a very strong term, indeed. What is it that has prompted this patient, meek, humble servant of God to pour forth so suddenly such an outburst of holy indignation. Not another letter of his can be found in which he commences with such vehemence and apparent impatience. And we may be sure he would not indulge in them here but for great provocation and a clear sense that some very dangerous doctrine, calculated to greatly mar the Christian system, was being promulgated. The gospel was being “perverted” and undermined, and other means of salvation substituted. Would such language have been in place if these Jewish teachers had been trying to have them keep the ten commandments very strictly, and the Galatians were following such instruction closely, neither killing, lying, committing adultery, nor stealing, thinking thus to be justified by their good works? To our mind such a conclusion would be absurd. But if these teachers were trying to lead the Galatian brethren to adopt circumcision with its attendant typical remedial system, virtually doing away with the great sacrifice on Calvary, then such language would be very much in place. We must bear in mind also how Paul was constantly beset by this same class of teachers, as we shall see. They came near taking his life at Damascus, when he first believed in Christ. Multitudes in Jerusalem thirsted for his blood, and even swore they would never eat or drink till they had killed him. They met him in every city he entered, stirring up the people against him. And now in his absence, with their Jewish notions of circumcision, they had turned away his beloved children in the Lord. No wonder the righteous indignation of the apostle is aroused!*LBG 16.7*

Verse 10: “For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ,*LBG 17.1*

“11. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.*LBG 17.2*

“12. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*LBG 17.3*

“13. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God,

and wasted it:*LBG 17.4*

“14. And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.*LBG 17.5*

“15. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace,*LBG 17.6*

“16. To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:*LBG 17.7*

“17. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.*LBG 17.8*

“18. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and abode with him fifteen days.*LBG 18.1*

“19. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord’s brother.*LBG 18.2*

“20. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.*LBG 18.3*

“21. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;*LBG 18.4*

“22. And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ:*LBG 18.5*

“23. But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.*LBG 18.6*

“24. And they glorified God in me.”*LBG 18.7*

In this quotation Paul begins by again referring to the proofs of his divine call to the apostleship, a fact to which he refers over and over in this letter. Evidently these Judaizing teachers had disparaged him and his position, and exalted the apostles at Jerusalem far above him, because he taught that these special Jewish distinctions were set aside.*LBG 18.8*

He next refers to his former zeal in the “Jews’ religion,” or in “Judaism,” as it is translated in the Diaglott. “Ye have heard of my conversation,” or course of life, “in time past in Judaism,” and how I “persecuted the church of God, and wasted it.” He “profited in Judaism” above his equals, being “more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers.” Why does the apostle present this striking reference to his former experience in Judaism as a zealot and a persecutor, in his argument with the Galatian brethren?—Because it was wonderfully in place. These Judaizing teachers were leading the brethren back to the very doctrines Paul had discarded, telling them they must be circumcised, and keep up the wall of separation, or they could not be saved, as we shall soon see. But had not Paul been over all that ground before? Had he not profited in this kind of religion more than any in his nation? Had he not excelled them all in his zeal for these very things they were trying to sustain? Could these teachers or the brethren they were leading astray hope to practice or comprehend those doctrines as well as he had, with his great ability, erudition, and remarkable zeal? -Certainly not. But when Christ revealed himself to Paul, on the road to Damascus, he had seen the utter unprofitableness of all these peculiar doctrines of Judaism by which they were now trying to be saved. The great light of Christianity had fully delineated the purpose and design of all those ordinances for the past. Should they now go back to those things which Paul had fully explored, understood, and discarded, and cast aside the glorious light which he had received by direct revelation from the Lord, and preached to them? Preposterous! If they should, they would be going back from light into darkness. These were considerations which Paul’s reference to his former experience must have fastened upon the minds of the Galatian brethren.*LBG 18.9*

But what were these doctrines of Judaism to which he refers, and for which he was so zealous before his conversion? Was it a special zeal for the doctrines of the moral law which so distinguished him, and led him to persecute the church? No Seventh-day Adventist will claim that. No doubt the disciples whom he persecuted, kept that law much better than he did or his associates. So far as we know, the Jews themselves never claim that the principles of the ten commandments are peculiar to their nation. They believe all men are morally bound to keep them, the

Sabbath included. They well know there is nothing Jewish about that law. But it was the claims of another law, involving “the traditions of the fathers” and Jewish superiority and exclusiveness, circumcision, and kindred ordinances, and salvation through Judaism and its doctrines, and not through Jesus, which roused Paul to such a pitch of zeal. His leading design in writing this letter was to set before them the folly of their Judaizing defection.*LBG 19.1*

In the remaining part of this quotation; the apostle continues the narration of his personal experience, presenting his course of action after his conversion. He was called of God to preach Christ “among the heathen.” He had a divine call to this special work which no other apostle had to the same degree. He did not receive his knowledge of Christian doctrine from the church at Jerusalem or the apostles, but from direct revelation. And though he did spend fifteen days with Peter three years after his conversion, yet it was not through him or any human authority that he received his commission. God’s providence separated Paul largely from the leading influential men in the church, and by special illumination prepared him to take a leading position in bringing the gospel to the heathen world. His former experience and education and thorough knowledge of Judaism had prepared his mind to comprehend all it could accomplish for humanity. And when the light of the gospel was fully revealed to him, he was thoroughly equipped to meet the opposing Judaizing teachers found in every city, and expose their weakness, and bring the light of the gospel in all its fullness to the Gentile world. No other apostle was prepared to do such a work in this direction as Paul. In this letter to the Galatian believers he refers to these things that they may understand his thorough qualification as an apostle, which these false teachers had tried to belittle.*LBG 19.2*

Chapter 2:1: “Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.*LBG 20.1*

“2. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.*LBG 20.2*

“3. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:*LBG 20.3*

“4. And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:*LBG 20.4*

“5. To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”*LBG 20.5*

We here reach a most interesting point in the consideration of the subject before us. The circumstances mentioned in this connection unmistakably identify this visit with the one mentioned in *Acts 15*. The questions agitating the minds of the disciples in both cases are the same. The circumstances mentioned are the same. The parties or persons referred to are substantially the same. The chronology of both is the same. And no other recorded visit of the apostle will harmonize the statements of the chronology of this visit but the one recorded in *Acts 15*. Conybeare and Howson, in their “Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul,” present an exhaustive argument in favor of this view, in which every objection to it ever urged, is considered and answered. They declare that “the majority of the best critics and commentators” agree in the identity of these visits. For lack of space we cannot enter into a lengthy argument to prove this. It is not necessary. Most likely none of our brethren will question this; but those who wish to examine this point fully, we refer to the seventh chapter of Conybeare and Howson’s valuable work. Dr. Clarke and many other commentators, and Sr. White also, sustain this view.*LBG 20.6*

To obtain a comprehensive view of this visit and its significance, we notice the corresponding facts in *Acts 15*: “And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, *ye cannot be saved*. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.” *Verses 1, 2.LBG 21.1*

After reaching Jerusalem, and giving an account of their past labors, the record continues: “But there rose up certain of the sect

of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.”

Verses 5-11.LBG 21.2

Perhaps there never was a greater crisis in the early church than this. The cloud had been gathering for years. Questions concerning the obligation of the law of Moses had been constantly arising. The gospel was now spreading far and wide. Multitudes of Gentiles were becoming interested in it, and man had embraced it. These Judaizing teachers were everywhere stirring up trouble. Paul and Barnabas had great “dissension and disputation” with them. They followed on the track of these apostles who were preaching specially to the Gentiles, disturbing those converted, and unsettling their faith in that which these apostles preached. They crept in “privily to spy out the liberty” which the disciples had in Christ, constantly thrusting in their Jewish notions. They were determined to bring the believers “into bondage” to their notions of the obligation of Jewish laws and customs. The extent to which they carried their teachings is clearly set forth in these scriptures. They said: “Except ye be circumcised,” and keep the law of Moses, “ye cannot be saved.” All the Gentile world, then, must be circumcised and really become Jews. All those rites, services, and customs in Moses’ law must be obeyed. In this case the glorious light and freedom of the gospel must be circumscribed to the narrow bounds of Jewish bondage.*LBG 21.3*

It is no wonder Paul declares, “We gave place by subjection” to them, “no, not for an hour.” He, saw, at a glance that the integrity of the whole gospel system was at stake. If these Jewish positions

were to stand, and be generally accepted, Christ could not be the promised Messiah, and his death was in vain. Faith in him was not the saving principle. They were to be saved by circumcision and the services of the law of Moses. The wellbeing of the Christian church demanded, and the system of faith in Christ which he taught required, that this question should be settled once and forever. It was the turning-point in the history of the Christian church, between liberty and bondage, Jewish narrowness and exclusiveness and the freedom which is in Christ Jesus. The gospel never could accomplish its mission to the ends of the earth with such a burden placed upon it. The circumstances of the case required, and a special revelation from the Lord directed, that this momentous question be brought before the highest tribunal of the church for settlement,-a general conference of the believers at Jerusalem.*LBG 22.1*

Paul and Barnabas, the special apostles to the Gentiles, and a company of the brethren went up from Antioch to attend it. They took Titus with them. He was an example and an illustration of the whole question, an uncircumcised Greek, but a devoted Christian. What would the brethren do with him? Would they receive him as a brother in the common faith? or would they cast him aside, and refuse to own him as one of them until he should receive this old test of Jewish discipleship-circumcision? Was the test of Christianity to be the same as that of Judaism? or was a heart made pure by faith in a crucified Saviour to be the test? Paul could not, in any possible way, have brought the matter home more forcibly than he did by taking the devoted Titus with him.*LBG 22.2*

It is impossible for us, after eighteen centuries of Gentile freedom, to realize the intense interest which centered in this contest which was to be decided by the Council. It seemed to the Hebrew converts, who had been strict Pharisees, that everything which they had held sacred in their past experience was now to be swept away. For centuries subsequent to the captivity, scattered as they were among the Gentiles; they had struggled to maintain their distinctive national characteristics under great difficulties. They had been hated for it, and often persecuted. And now these were all to be swept aside, and they be placed on a level with the Gentiles, against whom they had guarded themselves so strictly. The reason

of their blindness was because they failed to discern the vast importance of the death of Christ. Had they realized this as Paul did, all would have been plain.*LBG 23.1*

No wonder there was much “disputation” and heat manifested as they approached the solution of this great question. Paul, like a wise manager, had held private consultations with the apostles and leading brethren. When they came to consider the subject they could not fail to see that his position was the only sound one, the only possible one to take. Peter in the Council rehearsed the facts connected with the conversion of Cornelius, the first plain instance of Gentile conversion. In this case God had given the witness of the Spirit as a divine evidence of acceptance without circumcision. What testimony could have been stronger than this? And large numbers of others had been converted, and received the same evidence. Should they now go backward, and impose a yoke of bondage upon these disciples after God had accepted them and given them the same Spirit the Hebrew disciples had received? This would be highly absurd.*LBG 23.2*

Then Paul and Barnabas recounted the wonderful instances of divine power attending their ministry among the Gentiles. Many had received the gospel, and mighty miracles had been wrought, giving evidence that God was with them in their work; no apostle had performed greater miracles. They had not required these Gentiles to be circumcised. Would it now be reasonable to set aside all these evidences of divine sanction and refuse to accept them as disciples by erecting the old wall of separation? Preposterous!*LBG 24.1*

These were arguments which the Jewish disciples, zealous for Moses’ law, found it hard to answer. Finally James, the brother of our Lord, arose, a man of venerable appearance and great sanctity, usually called “James the Just.” He was acting as the presiding officer on this occasion. He presents other strong reasons in behalf of the position of Paul and Barnabas, and then the decision of the Council is rendered: “Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment: it seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you,

with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.” *Verses 24-29.LBG 24.2*

Thus this momentous question was settled, and gospel liberty gained a great victory. The Gentile believers could become members of the family of Christ Jesus without obedience to the ritual law. Circumcision, the badge of Jewish exclusiveness, was set aside. Titus was not “compelled to be circumcised,” and the Jewish zealots were decidedly snubbed. What a vast load this Council lifted off from the church! What a terrible incubus would have fallen upon it had the decision gone the other way! Paul must have returned to Antioch with a light heart.*LBG 24.3*

But what have this Council and its decision to do with the question we are considering—the law in Galatians? It has everything to do with it. The very same question precisely which came before the Council is the main subject of the apostles letter to this church. If the moral law is the main subject of the epistle, why did Paul bring in the work of the Council at Jerusalem? Will any Seventh-day Adventist claim that the moral law was the subject considered by that Council? Was it the moral law which Peter characterizes as “a yoke ...which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?” Were the moral and ceremonial laws all mixed up and confounded in the Council? Did the decision of that body set aside the laws against stealing, lying, Sabbath-breaking, and murder? We all know better. The Council took no cognizance whatever of the ten commandments. There was no dispute about their universal obligation. But not so concerning the Jewish law. That was in dispute. Paul, then, in Galatians, making the subject of Moses’ law prominent, brings in this Council at Jerusalem as a most forcible evidence of the wrong position of the Galatian church. It is the ceremonial and not the moral law that he has in view. To take any other position concerning his reference to this Council would be to claim that Paul had no proper ideas of a logical argument; for

assuredly if he was trying to prove to the Galatians the binding obligation of the moral law, and their justification through faith for its transgression, there would be no force whatever in prominently referring to the decision of a council which limited its consideration to an entirely different law. The view we advocate makes Paul's argument perfectly logical and consistent throughout. The opposite view breaks it up, and renders it illogical.*LBG 24.4*

Verse 6: "But of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person: for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:*LBG 25.1*

"7. But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;*LBG 25.2*

"8. (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles;)*LBG 25.3*

"9. And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.*LBG 25.4*

"10. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do."*LBG 26.1*

In this quotation an interesting fact is presented, which had an important bearing upon the question Paul was discussing with the Galatian brethren. It would seem from this description that the position of Paul's apostleship, as to its relative importance in the work of the gospel, was here defined and settled as never before. Paul's experience had been peculiar and striking. First a bitter persecutor, the worst one the disciples had to meet, carrying terror and dismay wherever he went: then, after his remarkable conversion, which many might not have been aware of, he became, after a season, a laborer in the gospel. After his conversion, he disappeared in Arabia for about three years. Many may have thought he had apostatized. From several scriptures it appears

there was much suspicion in the church concerning the genuineness of his change; till Barnabas sought him out. When he began to labor, it was for the Gentiles; and the doctrines he taught were very unpalatable to the Hebrew converts. Until this meeting at Jerusalem, he seems not to have been generally acknowledged as having an independent mission. But it seems likely some thought him “antagonistic to the apostles at Jerusalem; others, that he was entirely dependent upon them.” Such is Conybeare and Howson’s view.*LBG 26.2*

But all was changed at this Council. They fully discerned his mission, and saw that the Holy Spirit had placed this work of reaching the Gentile world especially under his charge. The views he had taught were now fully accepted by the apostles and the church at large, at least in theory. Paul and Barnabas’ now received the right hand of fellowship, signifying that their course was fully approbated. They were sent on their mission to “the heathen,” while Peter still continued to act a leading part among the Hebrew portion of the church. A wonderful victory had been gained for the cause of truth taught by Paul in this great crisis. The prominence of this question in the apostolic church may be discovered from the fact that no other general Council of like character ever occurred in the early church. From this time onward, the whole burden of the work of the gospel, as its history is given in the book of Acts, seems to have been among the Gentiles. This Council gave great encouragement to the work among the heathen. The main interest of the history of the church centers in Paul’s labors from this point. These facts, as cited by the apostle in his letter, must have had great force with the Galatian brethren, who had now fallen under the influence of these same Judaizing teachers.*LBG 26.3*

We do not see how his argument could be more forcible. Paul substantially said to them, Are you going back to the ceremonial law and circumcision, after the great Council at Jerusalem has decided against them, and after the doctrines I have taught and my special mission to the Gentile world have been fully approbated by the apostles at Jerusalem and the whole church of believers? Will you follow these false teachers rather than the whole church? It must have been a most convincing appeal.*LBG 27.1*

Verse 11: “But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.*LBG 27.2*

“12. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.*LBG 27.3*

“13. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.*LBG 27.4*

“14. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?*LBG 27.5*

“15. We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,*LBG 27.6*

“16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*LBG 27.7*

“17. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.*LBG 27.8*

“18. For if build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.*LBG 27.9*

“19. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.*LBG 28.1*

“20. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*LBG 28.2*

“21. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by

the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”*LBG 28.3*

We have here the third historical reference to facts in Paul's experience having a special bearing upon the subject discussed in his letter, being his public reproof of the apostle Peter in the presence of others, and the substance of the remarks made on this occasion. It seems Peter came down to Antioch soon after the great Council, before Paul and Barnabas left on their next tour of labor. At first he lived as Paul did, eating with the Gentiles, and paying no attention to the Jewish laws and customs. But when some of the disciples from Jerusalem came down to Antioch, who were still zealous for all the requirements of Moses' law, Peter withdrew, and no longer acted as before. The current became so strong in that direction that even Barnabas, Paul's companion, was carried away with the rest. It took a man of great nerve and stamina and intelligent, conscientious convictions, like Paul, to withstand the pressure of influence brought to bear on this occasion. This shows how strong the feeling was in behalf of the customs of Judaism in the early church. It is astonishing that after the decisions of the Council such an eminent man as Peter was in the church, and one who had acted in the Council with Paul in behalf of the same positions concerning Moses' law which Paul had held, should be so soon swept under this influence. And still more so that Barnabas, the companion of Paul, who had participated with him in his experience among the Gentiles, and strongly contended for the same positions, should also fall under the influence of these Judaizing teachers. These wonderful inconsistencies, however, only show the pressure of influence brought to bear in behalf of these national distinctions at that time in the church, which centered at Jerusalem. This influence made the call of a great council necessary. And though the decision had been wholly in favor of the truth as Paul held it, yet the spirit of national caste still remained. Such influences are the very hardest to overcome of any with which poor human nature has to contend.*LBG 28.4*

We have illustrations of the same principle, in a measure at least, in our day, in the feelings of many white people toward those who have been in slavery in the past; and in India in the distinctions of caste. When parties from both sides are converted to Christ, it seems impossible even then to get those in the higher position to

associate socially with those from the lower classes. This was even more the fact in the case of Jewish and Gentile converts, and was especially the case in regard to eating together. Says Conybeare and Howson, p. 178: "The peculiar character of the religion which isolated the Jews was such as to place insuperable obstacles in the way of social union with other men. Their ceremonial observances precluded the possibility of their eating with the Gentiles." As Peter said to Cornelius it is "an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation." *Acts 10:28*. The great charge against him upon his return to Jerusalem was, "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." *Acts 11:3*. And though the principles on which the decisions of the Council were based, would overthrow such views theoretically, yet the feeling still existed, and even Peter and Barnabas had not strength at all times to stand before it. *LBG 29.1*

It may well be doubted if the churches of Judea and Jerusalem ever fully recovered from this feeling; for in Paul's last visit the same feelings existed so strongly that he, with James' advice, gave up to it in a measure, and participated in some of the services of the ceremonial law, and in consequence was captured in the temple, and suffered a long imprisonment. *Acts 21*. The obligation of the ceremonial law was really involved in this eating question just as truly as in the questions concerning circumcision, which came before the Council; only it was a little different phase of it. *LBG 29.2*

That Paul should have rebuked the apostle Peter in such a public manner as he did on this occasion, shows that he must have considered the issue an exceedingly important one, involving the integrity of the system of gospel teaching which he preached. Simon Peter had long been among the foremost of the apostles. Taught by the Saviour himself, the "gospel of the circumcision" had been specially "committed" to him, as that of the uncircumcision had to Paul. Great miracles had been wrought by him. The whole Christian church looked up to him as rather the leading man in it. Christ had greatly honored him. He was doubtless an older man than Paul; yet Paul, the junior laborer, usually a very meek and humble man, publicly reprov'd this eminent apostle to his face. We may be sure this never would have been done had not Paul felt very deeply in his soul that the occasion demanded it because a

great principle was to be vindicated.*LBG 29.3*

Peter “was to be blamed.” It was at an important crisis, just as the great principle of gospel liberty was struggling for the supremacy in the church against the desperate, persistent efforts of those who were determined to impose the yoke of Jewish ritual bondage upon the necks of the Gentile converts. Peter, through fear of man, permitted himself to be placed on the wrong side of this question, dragging Barnabas and nearly all the Jews present along with him. Paul was forced by his regard for truth to speak out, even to reprove his brethren of great influence older than himself. Paul well knew that if such examples as these were to be followed, the cause of God would be hindered. If Jew and Gentile Christians could not eat together, how could they ever make one body, one family in Christ? It would be impossible. This rebuke was deserved. God sustained Paul’s reproof, and has permitted this historical fact to stand on the page of inspiration, showing the weakness of one of his most eminent servants. Peter never attempted to answer, for he well knew no answer could be given.*LBG 30.1*

Why does Paul bring up this circumstance in his letter to the Galatian brethren?—Because it was a case exactly in point. They were going back to the same principles and practices for which Peter had been justly rebuked. Their course had been condemned, even in one so high as the great apostle Peter; and he had submitted to the reproof as just. Should they now, under the influence of a similar troublesome class of Judaizing teachers, continue in a wrong course which had demanded and received such a rebuke?—Certainly not.*LBG 30.2*

Question: Did this course of Peter involve the question of the ten commandments? Had it the slightest reference to them? Were they under consideration in any sense whatever in this transaction?—By no means. The whole matter related to the law of types and uncleanness, the obligation of the law of Moses. The moral law was not involved.*LBG 30.3*

Let us now consider Paul’s remarks to Peter and those who had followed him. “If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles [as he had been doing before certain came from

Jerusalem] and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" This, of course, was a wonderful inconsistency, caused solely by Peter's fear of man, lest his influence among the Jewish disciples should be lessened. He knew he would likely be called in question for his course when he returned to Jerusalem. "We who are Jews by, nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles [such as Peter, Barnabas, and Paul], knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, *even we* have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." *LBG 31.1*

We must remember, of course, that these words were spoken in reproof to those who recognized the Jewish laws of uncleanness as still in force. These were intimately associated with, and really a part of, that great typical remedial system which passed away at the cross. *LBG 31.2*

Peter and Barnabas well knew that though all their earlier lives they had regarded and obeyed them, yet that fact did not afford salvation. They themselves, all of them strict Jews in the past, had to be saved by faith in Christ. How preposterous, then, to set up this old typical standard of ceremonies and "divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation," for the Gentiles to obey, as in effect they had been doing at Antioch in refusing to eat with Gentiles! If these old provisions of Moses' law would not save such devout men as Peter, Barnabas, and Paul had been, could they be any benefit to the Gentiles who had never regarded them?—Certainly not. "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God," etc. *LBG 31.3*

That our explanation of *verses 15, 16* is correct, these quotations clearly prove. Paul in his reproof is referring directly to the wrong

course of Peter and Barnabas, who virtually acknowledged the requirements of the laws of eating and drinking in refusing to eat with the Gentiles. "If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." Peter and Paul both had shown that those laws were destroyed, by eating with the Gentile converts on terms of equality. But Peter and Barnabas, in refusing to eat with the Gentiles, had now recognized them as *still being in force*. Therefore by their own acts they made themselves "transgressors," literally "violators of law" (original Greek), *i.e.*, sinners. What effect, then, had their faith in Christ had upon them? According to their course of conduct, they had first recognized the insufficiency of these ceremonial laws to save them by believing in Christ, no longer regarding those laws which had passed away. But now Peter had gone back and recognized those laws as binding, and commenced to observe them again. What effect, then, had his faith in Christ had upon him? It had simply led him to violate a law he now acknowledged. Hence this would make Christ the minister of sin; he would not be sufficient for salvation. Christ had led him to break a law he now felt obliged to keep. This old law concerning uncleanness must be kept in order to salvation. Against such a false position Paul utters an emphatic, *God forbid!* It is evident from this that those Jewish converts felt that they must keep those laws which were abolished at the cross, in order to be justified; while Christ was the only source of Paul's justification. *LBG 32.1*

We cannot admit that in these words addressed to Peter, showing him the folly and inconsistency of the position he had assumed in refusing to eat with the Gentile Christians, there is the slightest reference to the moral law. Though there are expressions which are similar to those used in Romans and other scriptures which in those places refer to the moral law, yet that proves nothing certain. We are perfectly free to admit that if some of these expressions were used where the premises of the apostle's argument had been considering the moral law, they might properly enough apply to that. But such is not the case here, and hence similarity of expression proves nothing. To get the sense of a writer's thought, the connection must be considered, the facts upon which the argument is based, and the objective point of it. We have had here nearly two entire chapters in this letter, about one third of the whole epistle, and hitherto we have not had a single reference to the moral law;

but through it all constant reference is made to the other law, that of Moses. And immediately preceding these expressions are the plainest references to the subject in his reproof to Peter on the question of defilement in eating. Does the moral law cover such ground? Had Peter destroyed that and then built it up again? Which of the ten commandments would have been violated in eating with the Gentiles? Were these Jewish disciples forcing such a pressure to oblige the Gentiles to keep the laws of the decalogue? We all know that such conclusions are perfectly absurd.*LBG 32.2*

To suppose, then, that Paul had reference to the moral law in the expressions, "not justified by the works of the law," and "I through the law am dead to the law," etc., is to pervert the whole argument of the apostle, implying that while all through the Galatian letter thus far he had been referring to the ceremonial law, and reproving Peter for sustaining it by example, he suddenly turned away from the subject in hand, and brought in an entirely different law, which had no relation to the subject before him. Such a violent assumption is entirely inadmissible. It is wholly unnecessary. The argument of the apostle as we have presented it, is entirely consistent with itself, with all the facts thus far brought to view in the letter, and with his main object in writing to that church. Paul was strenuously contending for the liberty of the Christian church against Judaizing teachers who wanted to again impose the yoke of bondage which neither he nor his fathers were able to bear.*LBG 33.1*

"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." These teachers did frustrate the grace (favor) of God which came through the death of Christ and his pardoning love. No law could be given through which weak, sinful man could reach that standard of righteousness which God required. It must be attained through the help of Christ. How foolish, then, were Peter and Barnabas and these Jewish disciples under a pressure to go back and recognize this old yoke of bondage, which they themselves had once destroyed? It had always been "weak," "unprofitable," "carnal." It could never "take away sin." Why, then, should these men revive it. Paul's argument was triumphant for the occasion, and Peter made, no reply.*LBG 33.2*

A word further concerning "justification." We fully believe the Epistle

to the Galatians, as well as the Epistle to the Romans, proves the necessity of being justified by faith for our transgressions of the moral law, and the absolute impossibility of being justified by future obedience to any law for our sins of the past. But in that age there were *two laws* supposed by some to be in force; and there were even more who looked to obedience to the ceremonial law, with its circumcision, types, shadows, and multitude of observances, for justification, than to the moral law. And this was natural, for in it had been contained the typical *remedial system* of the past dispensation. All the virtue it possessed was the fact that it pointed to Christ. Most likely many did not discern this, and thought obedience to its provisions alone would take away sins. After Christ came, and it lost *all* its virtue, they still looked to it for justification. To correct this error was the main object of Paul's letter to the Galatians.*LBG 34.1*

The mistake of our brethren is in trying to prove that the Galatians were seeking justification through obedience to the moral law, whereas they were really seeking it through obedience to the Mosaic law. We believe the term "works of the law" refers to the ceremonial law in almost if not every instance where it is used,*LBG 34.2*

Chapter 3:1: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?*LBG 34.3*

"2. This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*LBG 34.4*

"3. Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*LBG 34.5*

"4. Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.*LBG 34.6*

"5. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*LBG 34.7*

"6. Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for

righteousness.*LBG 35.1*

“7. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*LBG 35.2*

“8. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.*LBG 35.3*

“9. So then they which are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”*LBG 35.4*

We now reach the commencement of a special argument of the apostle on the subject in hand. There are three general divisions in this epistle. The first two chapters are mainly occupied with historical references to facts in Paul's experience which, as we have seen, have an important bearing on the subject. Then follows an argument of the apostle, comprised in the next two chapters and a little more, while nearly a remaining third of the letter is given to precious practical instruction in various Christian duties, interspersed with a few references concerning the main subject of the epistle.*LBG 35.5*

We claim that the historical facts which we have thus far noticed, and the argument which follows in chapters three and four, are intimately and logically connected; are really parts of Paul's special effort to correct the errors into which the Galatian church had fallen, and an answer once and forever to the persistent efforts of these Judaizing teachers to bind the yoke of ceremonial observances upon the Gentile church. As one proof of this we here adduce the conclusion of Paul's argument in the beginning of chapter five: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace,” etc. Here we have the leading conclusion of Paul's lengthy argument in chapters three and four.*LBG 35.6*

We have quite carefully noticed the first division of his letter, with

three historical references: (1.) His account of his own religious experience in Judaism-how weak and unprofitable it was, though he excelled all others in zeal for and proficiency in it; (2.) His reference to the Council at Jerusalem, and its decisions against the position the Galatian brethren had taken in regard to circumcision; (3.) His public reproof of Peter for weakly going back to the ceremonial law. All these refer wholly to that law. Then follow his argument and the conclusion reached. This last, we see, relates to precisely the same subject. "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." "Every man that is circumcised ...is a debtor to do the whole law." "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Can we conclude, with the *premises* of the argument relating to circumcision and the ceremonial law, and the *conclusion* of it relating to the same things, that the argument itself relates to a wholly different law? That would be very absurd. Therefore as we enter upon the argument itself, we have every reason to expect it will be found in perfect harmony with its premises and conclusion.*LBG 35.7*

The revised version renders the first verse as follows: "O foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified?" the clause "that ye should not obey the truth," being omitted. The Diaglott is substantially the same, there being nothing in the literal Greek text to answer to that expression." Foolish Galatians, who hath *bewitched you?*" literal Greek, "misled by delusive pretenses." Here wrong *practices* seem to be intended. It is not likely Paul would have used such an expression, and spoken in such cutting language, if these Galatians had been making a special point of keeping the ten commandments very strictly, thinking that by so doing they would be justified by their good works. He would have spoken in milder language if their practice had been right, and simply their views of doctrine wrong. But how natural such an expression after his threefold reference to the ceremonial law in reproving them for going back to those "weak and beggarly elements." Paul had preached a crucified Saviour to them as their only hope. He made known unto all nothing but "Christ and him crucified." What folly, to go back to the yoke of bondage again!*LBG 36.1*

In the second verse and onward, the apostle proceeds to contrast

the work of faith in Christ which had been preached to them, with the “works of the law.” Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, as to now seek to be made perfect by the flesh? Have all your sufferings from persecution been in vain, if it be yet in vain? Does he that works miracles among you do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Those were all very pertinent questions. What does the apostle mean by the term “works of the law”? Does he mean keeping the Sabbath, and refraining from swearing, lying, stealing, murder, and adultery? or does he mean acts of obedience to the ceremonial law, which had been abolished? We all believe there are two separate, distinct laws brought to view in the Bible. Paul must have had one or the other in view. Both had “works” connected with them. The law of rites had an immense amount of these, so that they constituted a “yoke of bondage” grievous to be borne, which Paul claimed had passed away.*LBG 37.1*

Much turns on the meaning we attach to this expression “works of the law,” in the discussion of the law in Galatians. The sense in which it is used in any given scripture, must be determined from the connection and the subject of discourse. None of us can deny that there are two laws, and that both of them have “works” connected with them; and this same apostle in different places discourses upon each of them. It will not do, therefore, to conclude that in every case where the term “works of the law” occurs, it must needs refer to obedience to the law of God. We claim that it usually refers to the other. Which class of works are referred to in these verses? Our reasons for understanding it to refer to circumcision, etc., are as follows: 1. This has been Paul’s subject thus far in this letter. 2. He has not spoken of the moral law previous to this, but has spoken many times of the ceremonial law. 3. He uses the same term in *chap. 2:16*, in reproving Peter, “because he was to be blamed,” when he recognized the laws of defilement, a few verses previous to this. There the reference to the works of the ritual law are unmistakable. He must use the term here in the same sense, to be consistent with his own argument. 4. In the question, “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law?” the language would imply that when they did receive the Spirit, they did not perform the works of the law. This would be an absurd conclusion if applied to the moral

law; for they would not have received the Spirit had they not kept it. But the language is perfectly appropriate when applied to the ritual law. 5. It is evident that the term being “made perfect by the flesh,” in *verse 3*, is an expression meaning the same as the term doing the “works of the law,” found in *verse 2*. But this would be improper language when speaking of obedience to the moral law. The ten commandments are not fleshly. With our view, the argument is connected and logical throughout. In *verse 4* he speaks of their persecutions for the gospel’s sake. In *chap. 6:12* we see they could have avoided this by obedience to this ceremonial law. Then the offense of the cross would have ceased. In that case, if circumcision was accepted, all their persecutions had been for naught, and their embracing the gospel was useless. Circumcision and the ceremonial law were the saving ordinances. Christ’s death could not save them without these. Such conclusions Paul shows were the result reached, if the positions assumed by the Galatian brethren were right.*LBG 37.2*

He next refers to the case of Abraham, and how faith saved him. He did not obtain his righteousness by obedience to any such laws; but through faith. The gospel was preached to him, and he believed in the coming Seed. We become the children of Abraham by imitating his course. He believed in Him that was to come. We believe in Him that has come. In doing this, God will bless us as he did faithful Abraham. How foolish, then, the course of these Galatians, who were “bewitched” by these Judaizing teachers, to go back to circumcision, and virtually cast aside their faith in Christ!*LBG 38.1*

Verse 10: “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*LBG 38.2*

“11. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.*LBG 38.3*

“12. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.*LBG 38.4*

“13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on

a tree.*LBG 39.1*

“14. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”*LBG 39.2*

“For as many as are of the law [that is, as many as look to the works of the law concerning which he is speaking, for their justification, as these Galatians were doing by accepting circumcision and all that it implied] are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” This curse is found in *Deuteronomy 27:26* only. The “book of the law” which was placed “in the side of the ark,” or at the side of it, contained both the moral and ceremonial laws. The language is not, Cursed be he that continueth not in all things written in the ten commandments to do them, as it doubtless would have been, had Paul had only the moral law in view. But the curse applied to any and all violations of the ceremonial law as well; for that was written in the book. Indeed a very large part of the “book of the law” was devoted to the ceremonial portion and to the civil law of the Jews. It is impossible to circumscribe this language to the transgressions of the moral law alone; for we know the “book of the law” contained more. We have no objection to the claim that the heaviest part of the curse would fall upon the violator of the moral law. But while the *whole* “book of the law” remained in force, the curse would also apply to violations of that. Therefore it was proper for Paul to refer to this in his argument. If these Galatians were going to reestablish the whole Jewish system, which would be the logical result of their action in adopting circumcision, they must thereby bring themselves under a curse. They well knew they had not always continued “in all things ...written in the book of the law to do them.” Instead of obtaining a blessing in their new departure from the faith of the gospel, they were bringing upon themselves a curse by going back to that ritual law.*LBG 39.3*

“But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith” Justification by the law is here used in the same sense as in *chap. 2:16*, where Paul is reproving Peter for not eating with the Gentiles, thus raising up

again what he had formerly thrown down. Also in *chap. 5:3, 4*: “For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” The connection in both these cases shows what law he was talking about. These Galatians were going back to the old, abolished remedial system for justification. The Judaizing teachers had told them they could not be saved by Christ without it. They virtually cast aside Christ as their Saviour. They were “fallen from grace.” But Paul taught the folly of this. There was no law in the universe ever given which would justify the breaker of it. “The law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.” Any law enacted by competent authority, demands perfect obedience while it remains in force. This principle is true of moral, ceremonial, and civil laws alike. But as this has never been fully done, another provision must be made. God has provided it in *justification by faith*. The ceremonial law and the remedial system connected with it never did present adequate provisions for pardon and justification. The blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin. All the multitude of services, ceremonies, “divers washings, and carnal ordinances” were imposed only “until the time of reformation.” How foolish, then, for these Galatians to go back again and set up that abolished law by which to obtain justification! This seems to be the reasoning of the apostle.*LBG 39.4*

“*Christ* hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” The original word rendered “*redeem*,” means to “buy from, redeem, or set free.”—*Greenfield*. (He quotes this text as an illustration.) We accept this statement to its fullest extent. Our friends who claim that the moral law is the subject of Paul’s discussion in this epistle, make their strongest argument, we think, upon this text. We wish to go with them as far as we can consistently. We are perfectly willing to admit that the curse brought to view in this text, from which Christ redeems his people, principally includes transgressions of the moral law; and that the words, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire” (*Matthew 26:41*) refer to the time when the curse of God will fall upon the sinner who fails to exercise faith in Christ and be thus “redeemed” from this curse. But how far does this go in setting aside our

position upon the law in Galatians?—Not far, we think.*LBG 40.1*

In order to have a clear, connected view of the apostle's argument, we must keep before us all the circumstances of time and place. He stood at the time of transition from the old dispensation to the new. But very few up to this time had realized that there was any great transition. They did not comprehend that those laws which had distinguished God's people for nearly two thousand years were to pass out of existence. Their feelings revolted at the thought. It took a long time for the bulk of the Hebrew church to take in this thought. They supposed these laws were still bidding. They did not comprehend all that was contained in the death of Christ. God had to raise up Paul as a special instrument, and inspire him especially with light to make this subject clear. To them Paul's argument sounded very different than it does to us, after eighteen centuries of Gentile influences. They would be likely to understand that the curse of the law would also apply to those who did not obey the law of Moses. And who will dare say that the curse would not apply to violators of the law of Moses contained in the "*book*," *while that law was in force*? It most assuredly would. But "Christ hath redeemed us [literally, *set us free*] from the curse of the law" by being made a curse himself by hanging "on a tree." What force would this have to the Galatian church?—Very great force. They, were trying to remove the curse of condemnation from themselves, so they could be "saved" by being circumcised, and going back to the abolished law of Moses for their justification. Paul told them, and proved it, too, from the Scriptures, that the death of Christ alone furnishes redemption. They were entirely wrong in their anticipations. This conclusion is in perfect harmony with Paul's whole argument.*LBG 41.1*

Vem 14. Abraham received a great blessing through his faith in the promised Seed. We receive the same blessing by imitating his conduct; by believing on Him that has come, who demonstrated his Messiahship by fulfilling all the conditions set before him in the Scriptures. We receive the Spirit by accepting him. The Galatians did not obtain the Spirit through their obedience to the law of Moses. They received it when faith in Christ as their only Saviour was cherished.*LBG 41.2*

Verse 15: “Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.*LBG 42.1*

“16. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.*LBG 42.2*

“17. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.*LBG 42.3*

“18. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.*LBG 42.4*

“19. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.”*LBG 42.5*

The apostle first speaks of the sacredness of a covenant, compact, or promise. Even a man’s covenant, if confirmed, is sacred, and cannot be set aside. He then refers to the promises to Abraham, and bases an argument upon the fact that in making the promise God uses the singular number instead of the plural, when he brings to view the expected seed. The promise was not to “seeds” (plural), but to his “seed” (singular), showing that the promise was not fulfilled in all of Abraham’s descendants according to the flesh, but that it was to be met in the one descendant, Christ the heir. And this promise, properly confirmed by God, cannot be set aside by a law given four hundred and thirty years after. The promise has the precedence in time and importance. And this promise of the “seed,” Christ, is the foundation of our hope of the future inheritance. Our hope of that does not originate with this law made four hundred and thirty years later. How foolish, then, that the Galatians should ignore the promise, and go back to that law for their hope of salvation, thus virtually setting aside Christ, the real foundation of their hopes for future good. The great fact that God gave the inheritance by promise to Abraham through this Seed, four hundred and thirty years before this law was given to which they looked for

justification, conclusively shows their folly in basing their hopes upon this law.*LBG 42.6*

“Wherefore then serveth the law?” that is, this law of which he is speaking, what was its object or purpose? What use did it serve? “It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made: and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.” This verse is a great central illuminator in the apostle’s argument. He here gives us the design of that law of which he was speaking, the time when given, the point to which it extended, the agencies by which it was brought into existence, and the reasons why it was given. If these conditions *reasonably, naturally apply* to the moral law, then our friends who hold that view concerning the law in Galatians should have the benefit of the evidence. Let us examine this scripture carefully. What law is intended by these expressions?*LBG 43.1*

1. It is reasonable to suppose that this reference to the law will be in harmony with Paul’s argument in the preceding part of the letter, which clearly brings to view the ceremonial law and not the moral law.*LBG 43.2*

2. This law was given four hundred and thirty years after the promise to Abraham. Could it, therefore, be the same as “my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” which Abraham kept? *Genesis 26:5*. They were evidently the moral law; hence this is not.*LBG 43.3*

3. This law was “added *because of transgressions*.” The original word signifies “to pass by or over; to transgress or violate.” This law, then, had been “added” because some other law had been “passed by,” “transgressed,” or “violated.” It was not “added” to itself because itself had been “violated.” This would be absurd if applied to the moral law; for none of us claim there was any more of the moral law really in existence after the ten commandments were spoken than there had been before. They all existed before, though Israel may have been ignorant of portions of them. If the word rendered “added” in both the old and revised versions be rendered “appointed,” as some do render it, the conclusion is equally clear. It could not properly be said that the moral law was “appointed four

hundred and thirty years after Abraham, when we see that it existed and he fully kept it at that time. It would be absurd to suppose this law was “added” to itself. It does apply reasonably to another law, brought in because the one previously existing had been “violated.” A law cannot be transgressed unless it exists; for “where no law is, there is no transgression.”!LBG 43.4

4. The law “added because of transgressions” unmistakably points to a *remedial system*, temporary in duration, “till the seed should come.” The moral law is referred to as the one transgressed. But the “added” law, of which Paul is speaking, made provision for the forgiveness of these transgressions in figure, till the real, Sacrifice should be offered.LBG 44.1

5. “Till the seed should come,” limits the duration of this remedial system, beyond all question. The word “till,” or “until,” ever has that signification. The “added” law, then, was to exist no longer than “till the seed should come.” This the language unmistakably declares. Did the moral law extend no farther than the full development of the Messiah? No Seventh-day Adventist will admit that. But this was precisely the case with the other law.LBG 44.2

6. The “added” law was “ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.” All agree that this “mediator” was Moses, who went between God and the people. The original word for “ordained” is rendered “promulgate” by Greenfield, who cites this text as an illustration. Was it true that the ten commandments were “ordained, or promulgated,” “by angels” in or by the hand of Moses? God himself spoke them with a voice that shook the earth, and wrote them with his own finger on the stone tablets. But the other law was given through angels, and written in a “book” by the “*hand of Moses*.” If the reader desires to see some of the instances where the same expression substantially is used when speaking of the “law of Moses,” we refer him to *Leviticus* 26:46; *Numbers* 4:37; 15:22, 23; and especially *Nehemiah* 9:13, 14, where the distinction is clearly made between the laws which God spoke and the “precepts, statutes, and laws” given “by the hand of Moses.” Many others might be cited.LBG 44.3

These reasons seem very clearly to prove that the law concerning

which the apostle is speaking, is the law of Moses written in a book, especially the typical remedial system.*LBG 44.4*

Our friends who hold the view that it is the moral law, of course make every effort possible to avoid this conclusion. They claim that the typical law was also in existence long before the law was given on Sinai; that it was recognized when the patriarchs offered sacrifices, even from the time of Abel, and that it would be as proper to speak of the “ordaining” of the moral law at Sinai as of the ceremonial, since both had a previous existence; that the principles of both laws had been lost sight of through sin and the captivity in Egypt. We know this is measurably true. But there remains this difference: the language unmistakably refers to a remedial system. “It was added because of transgressions.” A previous law existed to be transgressed, and this added law was to provide a temporal remedy “till the seed should come.” This language can never reasonably apply to the moral law; but it does apply to the ceremonial. No matter whether added at Sinai or as soon as man sinned in the Garden of Eden, it remains true of the typical remedial system that it was “added because of transgressions,” but is not true of the moral law.*LBG 44.5*

We also contend that the typical remedial system was not really “ordained” before Sinai and understood by the people in any such sense as the moral law was. We admit they did make offerings of beasts in sacrifice, and knew of some other services afterward incorporated into the law of Moses. But as a *system* it was *not* known to any such degree as were the principles of the ten commandments. We can find constant references to these, where persons well understood their existence. Cain knew very well he had broken God’s law and was guilty. Abraham kept these statutes, commandments, and laws. The antediluvians and Sodomites were destroyed as “sinners;” *i.e.*, transgressors of them. Joseph understood as well as we the wickedness of adultery, and would not commit this “great wickedness, and sin against God.” Enoch and Noah were “perfect” men and “walked with God.” They must, therefore, have been well acquainted with the principles of the moral law.*LBG 45.1*

But by far the largest portion of the typical remedial system owed its

vary existence to the time of Moses. The passover, the new moons, the sanctuary services other than offerings, the day of atonement, the pentecost, the special laws concerning uncleanness, the feast of tabernacles, various death penalties, the immense number of ordinances, etc, growing out of the priesthood work of the Levites and the civil laws of the Jewish nation, the special offerings connected with the scape-goat, and many other things too numerous to mention here connected with that system, were never heard of, indeed had no existence, before the book of the law was given. They were “ordained” at that time, as Paul indicates.*LBG 45.2*

Another argument, a very late invention, designed to avoid the conclusion that the “added” law terminated at the cross, we briefly notice. It is the claim that “the seed” has not yet come, and will not come till the second advent of Christ. It would be hard for the writer to really think that any believer in Christ would take that position, had we not read it in our own beloved *Signs of the Times, July 29, 1886*. It is seriously argued through two or three columns that the expression “till the seed should come to whom the promise was made” cannot be fulfilled till the promises made to the Seed are fulfilled. A large number of these are cited.*LBG 46.1*

But does the language indicate this? The coming of the Seed is one thing, and the fulfillment of the promises made to that Seed quite another thing. If the Seed never comes till the promises made to him are fulfilled, we shall have to wait a long time for the coming of the Seed; for some of them reach through eternity. “For unto us a child is born [the birth of this child by the woman, and his development until an offering for the sins of men is provided, is the coming of the Seed], unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever.” *Isaiah 9:6, 7*. The promises to this Seed, many of them, reach beyond the second advent, -as does this one,-even into eternity. So, according to this reasoning, we may wait to all eternity for the Seed to come. But the apostle, in the expressions

used, does not say *promises*, but “promise,” referring directly to the promise made to Abraham. But in the promise made to Abraham (*Genesis 12:1-7; 17:1-8*; both promises are really one), he agrees to make him and his seed a blessing to all the nations of the earth, and to give him the land of Canaan, which Paul, in *Romans 4:13*, enlarges to include all the “world.” *LBG 46.2*

Shall we conclude that a part of this promise is not already in process of fulfillment? Are not the nations of the earth already being greatly blessed in that seed by virtue of the way of salvation being opened to them all, and because of the precious influences of the gospel? Who dare deny it? If a part of these promises are being fulfilled in this present state, then according to that writer’s own reasoning the Seed has already come. If we must wait till *all* that promise made to Abraham is fulfilled before we look for the Seed, then the Seed cannot come till the end of the one thousand years; for the land is not inherited by Abraham till that time. The earth is a waste, a howling wilderness, for one thousand years after Christ comes. We can but regard such a position as this as utterly untenable and absurd. *LBG 47.1*

The coming of the Seed is one thing, and the fulfillment of the promises after the Seed comes, quite another. Indeed, of necessity the Seed must come before *any* of the promises made to the Seed could be fulfilled. A portion of them are already being fulfilled; hence the Seed has already come. Paul says (*verse 16*), “And to thy seed, which is Christ.” The “seed” and Christ, then, are one and the same. Therefore if the “seed” has not come, Christ has not come, in which case we are all in our sins, lost, without hope. To such preposterous conclusions does this position in the *Signs* lead. *LBG 47.2*

Again, if the Seed does not come till the second advent, as the existence of the law was to terminate when the Seed came, if that law is the moral law, we must of necessity conclude that God’s law ceases when Christ comes the second time—a conclusion but little less erroneous than the one which teaches its abrogation at the first advent. But why are such astonishing and erroneous positions as this taken?—To escape in some way the conclusion of *Galatians 3:19*, that this “added” law was to terminate at the cross. The Seed *has* come, born of a woman, the God-man, partaking of our nature.

He can never become to all eternity any more “the seed of the woman” the promised “seed of Abraham,” than he is already. We should like to have any one tell us how Christ becomes any more like the seed of Abraham” at the second advent than he was at the first? Is he to be born again of another descendant of the great patriarch? The whole idea is preposterous. This promised Seed made his great sacrifice for the race, by which they are being blessed, and there this “added law” terminated.*LBG 47.3*

Verse 20: “Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.*LBG 48.1*

“21. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*LBG 48.2*

“22. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*LBG 48.3*

“23. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*LBG 48.4*

“24. Wherefore the law was our school-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*LBG 48.5*

“25. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school-master.*LBG 48.6*

“26. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*LBG 48.7*

“27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*LBG 48.8*

“28. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*LBG 48.9*

“29. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”*LBG 48.10*

In these verses the apostle continues to discuss this “added” law with special reference to the object it was to accomplish. It was not against the promises of God, but rather designed to provide a temporary help to the people till in the “fullness of time,” when the “seed should come,” and the promises through the Seed should begin to be fulfilled. During all this time preceding the coming of the Seed, this promise of the Seed was the great hope of the people. The law given four hundred and thirty years after, by the same God who made the promise, of course would not stand in the way of, or set aside, a most glorious promise given by a God who could not lie. This “added” law would conduce to the same end by preparing the minds of the people for the full fruition of the promise. The promise that all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in this Seed the greatest hope ever vouchsafed to the race. This law was secondary to the promise, not “against” it. It was impossible, in the nature of things, for a law to be given which could give life to a race of sinners who had violated the divine law, the great moral rule which had ever been in force. The hope of the *promised Seed*, a more efficient agency than any law that could be given was provided by infinite wisdom to meet that want. Doubtless many Jews believed that “life” could be obtained by obedience to the “added” law of types, ceremonies, offered beasts, and blood streaming down the altars. But they did not see clearly the object of this law. They did not realize that it was only a temporary arrangement, shadowing forth darkly in figures, types, and allegories, the coming of the Seed and his great sacrifice. And even after Christ had come and died, many did not comprehend it who professed to believe on him. They still said, “Except ye be circumcised,” and “keep the law of Moses,” “ye cannot be saved.” *LBG 48.11*

This kind of teaching followed Paul wherever he went. God had raised him up with special reference to clearly explaining this great transition from the old to the new dispensation. And now he presents the matter to these Galatian brethren who had been bewitched by this Judaizing teaching. “If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law;” and the terrible sacrifice of the Son of God would not have been necessary. These Galatians had taken the contradictory position of believing in Christ, and at the same time going back for

salvation to services which, if in force, would make his death unnecessary; looking for salvation to obedience to a law whose main object had been to point out Christ's great sacrifice for sin.*LBG 49.1*

"But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." The revised version and the Diaglott say, "shut up" all under sin. This is the meaning of the original Greek word. All are sinners, Jew and Gentile alike. All need a Saviour. Though the Jews had kept this "added" law, and taught it to the Gentiles as necessary to salvation, yet they needed a Saviour just as much as did the Gentiles. How inconsistent, then, for the Galatians to go back to a law which would not save those who had kept it! "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." Is this text speaking of individuals previous to conversion, under the condemnation of the moral law till faith in Christ dawns upon their hearts? or does it speak of Paul's nation, the Jews, under guardianship as wards, under a provisional temporary system until Christ should come? Much turns upon which of these positions is the true one. We take the latter view unhesitatingly. The revised version reads: "But before faith came [*the faith*, margin], we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." Being "in ward," Webster defines as "the state of being under guard, or guardianship," "the condition of a child under custody." The Diaglott renders it, "And before the coming of *that faith*, we were guarded under law, being shut up together for the faith being about to be revealed."*LBG 49.2*

There can be no question but that the text brings to view a peculiar provisional arrangement, a "guarding" of a body of people, a "shutting them up together," an "enclosing of them," as the original Greek word signifies, until a certain time is reached when "*that faith*" will be revealed. We confidently assert that the word "*faith*" here is not used in the sense of a person's individual belief in Christ as a means of personal pardon for his sins, but is used in the sense of that great system of truth devised by God for the salvation of man—the belief in a crucified Saviour and kindred truths growing out of this central fact. Jude writes of the "common salvation," and that we

“should earnestly contend for *the faith* which was once delivered unto the saints.” Verse 3. We speak of keeping “*the faith* of Jesus.” Paul, in his closing words, said he had “kept *the faith*.” And in this same epistle to the Galatians he speaks of *the faith* which he preached (*chap. 1:23*), and of the “household of faith.” *Chap. 6:10*. Indeed, in a large number of instances where the word “faith” is used in the New Testament, it has this sense, as any one can see by taking his Concordance.*LBG 50.1*

The Jewish people and all proselytes who had any regard for the God of the Hebrews, were thus kept under this provisional system of the “added” law, “shut up,” hedged about by national barriers of distinction, from the rest of the world. They could not eat with them or associate intimately with them. A “middle wall of partition” divided them from others. They were “enclosed,” guarded on the right hand and on the left, till the great system of faith in a crucified Saviour was “afterwards revealed” by the coming of the promised “seed.”*LBG 50.2*

We would be much pleased to have our friends who hold that this “added” law was the ten commandments, tell us how the law against blasphemy, murder, lying, stealing, etc., “shut individuals up,” “guard” them “in ward,” in the relation of a “child to a guardian,” to a “revelation” to be made “afterwards.” But it is thought that in this verse the expression “under the law,” must refer to the sinner under the condemnation of the moral law. Lengthy arguments have been made in support of this; but we fail to see evidence to prove this position. We claim that this expression “under the law” has two significations: (1.) Primarily meaning under the authority of the law, or under obligation to keep it; (2.) Under the condemnation of the law, with its penalty impending over us, or already suffering it. The expression itself does not decide which of these meanings is to be understood; the connection must decide that.*LBG 51.1*

The Greek word rendered “under,” is *hupo*. It is used a great many times in the New Testament, and in the great majority of instances is rendered. “of,” “with,” or “by,” as the reader will see by examining his Greek Concordance. Greenfield gives a variety of definitions, such as the sense in many places requires, one of which is, “Of subjection to a law,” etc. He gives no instance where it is used in

the sense of being subject to the condemnation of the law; yet we are free to grant that it sometimes has that sense. But that is not the primary meaning of the term.*LBG 51.2*

We read in *Matthew 8:9* of “a man under authority, having soldiers *under*” him; i.e., authority was over him, and he was in authority over the soldiers, and each was to obey; not that he was under the condemnation of authority or the soldiers under his condemnation. “Under” in both cases is from the same word *hupo*. In *Romans 13:1* we read: “The powers that be are ordained *of* God.” “Of, is from *hupo*; i.e. under the authority of God. In *Galatians 4:2* we read of the child living “under [*hupo*] tutors and governors;” i.e., they have authority over the child, not that it is under their condemnation. Other illustrations might be given of the same sense. Indeed, the very nature of the expression itself signifies this, “under the law” simply meaning the law being above or having authority over the persons who were under it. This is the primary, simplest meaning of this term; and unless strong reasons can be adduced to the contrary, we should always give the expression this signification. Where reasons can be given to show that the sense requires us to understand it to mean the condemnation of the law, then we will so understand it, and not before. But evidently in the text we are now examining it means simply that the Jews were “shut up” under the authority of that typical remedial system, with its barriers, walls of separation, etc., till the system of faith should be revealed under which they could find salvation.*LBG 51.3*

“Wherefore the law was our school-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” “Wherefore” “expresses a consequence” from his preceding reasoning. The original Greek word requires this, as Greenfield states. The law “was [revised version, *hath been*] our *paidagogos*” (literal Greek), or pedagogue. The word occurs but three times in the New Testament, twice in this connection and once where it is rendered “instructor.” Greenfield defines it as follows: “A person, usually a slave or freed man, to whom the care of the boys of a family was committed, who trained them up and formed their manners, attended them at their play, led them to and from the public school, and, when they were grown up, became their companions, *noted for their imperiousness and severity*; in the New Testament, director, governor, instructor,

leader. *1 Corinthians 4:15; tropically spoken of the Mosaic law. Galatians 3:24, 25.* LBG 52.1

We have no person in our domestic or educational system in this age answering to this term. It is not properly a “school-master” or an “instructor” in the sense in which we would understand those terms. This person led the boys to school to be instructed by others. They did not continue to occupy this relation to them after the boys were grown to manhood. They merely held a temporary position, to pass away when the boys were fully developed. They were “noted for their *imperiousness* and *severity*.” They had the boys especially under their charge merely for a season. Does the holy eternal law of God, the “law of liberty,” occupy such a position as this? Is its relation to man that of a slave, an inferior, in any period of his life? Is it severe, “imperious,” because endued with a little temporary authority? Is its position merely a temporary one, lasting till the Christian is developed, and then ceasing its claims? Was it the office of the “*paidagogos*” after he got the boys to school, to then turn around and become their instructor, their supreme authority, ever after? Such views of the relation of God’s law to the sinner or any body else, would be manifestly absurd. LBG 52.2

But this relation eminently fits if we apply it to that provisional temporary system of law in which the Jew and proselyte were “shut up,” “in ward,” till the “middle wall of partition” was “broken down.” It was a “severe” system, “yoke of bondage” which they could not bear, “against” them, and “contrary to” them. LBG 53.1

Paul draws his conclusion from his reasoning in the previous verses, which we have examined. The moral law never led a man to Christ and left him. It always stays with him. We may be delivered from its condemnation; but its supreme authority must be regarded then as before. Its claims never leave us. There is nothing in that law about Christ, not a hint. All the law does, is to condemn those who break it, and justify those who keep it. It is the sense of guilt in the man’s conscience which is acted upon by the Spirit of God, which makes him go to Christ, not anything in the moral law itself. But this “added” law did lead to Christ. Every type, every sacrifice, every feast day, holy day, new moon, and annual Sabbath, and all the priestly offerings and services pointed out something in the work

of Christ. They were as a body “shut up,” “guarded,” under the control of this “severe,” “imperious” pedagogue, till the great system of justification by faith was reached at the cross of Christ. Mr. Greenfield could readily see that this pedagogue must be used as an illustration of the “Mosaic law.” It is strange that all others cannot see the same. “But after *that* faith is come, we are no longer under a [pedagogue, or] school-master.” The coming of “that faith” is the full development of the great system of faith or truth growing out of the death of Christ. “We are no longer under a” “pedagogue,” *i.e.*, no longer under his authority; his authority is no longer over us, because his office ceased when the “seed” came. Then all that accept Christ in his true character, are children of God. They are “baptized into Christ,” and hence “have put on Christ.” *LBG 53.2*

What, now, does Paul conclude from these grand truths? —“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all *one in Christ Jesus*.” All national social barriers are broken down in presence of the liberty which is in Christ Jesus; that is, all stand on a level before God. The proud Jew must come to God through Christ, the same as the despised barbarian. The females are no longer to be divided off into different worshiping assemblies by a special court because God looks upon a man with so much more favor than upon a woman. The poor slave can come to the blessed Saviour just as freely as can the lordly master who pretends to own him. All God now requires is a humble heart, repentance and confession of sin, faith in the precious blood of Christ, and a determination to serve God and obey all his requirements; and God regards one class as well as another. *LBG 54.1*

This may seem to us, eighteen centuries after these national and social distinctions have been swept away, as so plain a truth that it need not be demonstrated by an argument. But when Paul proclaimed it, it stirred up a bitterness in the minds of the supercilious Jews, of which we can scarcely conceive. They followed him everywhere, thirsting for his blood. The Jew had no thought of surrendering the preeminence he had so long held. The Greeks and Romans also exalted themselves as highly favored people. This great truth needed then, and has ever since, to be made plain to keep down pride, caste, and all social

exclusiveness.*LBG 54.2*

This forcible statement of the equity of all before God, is clearly a conclusion of the apostle's argument. To deny this, would be to charge the apostle with bringing in foreign matter in no wise related to his subject. But will our friends explain to us how this conclusion would grow out of his argument if it concerned the moral law? Did that law, in its relation to the sinner, create national distinctions between the Jew and Greek, bond or free, male and female?—Certainly not. But the ceremonial law did. It was the very agency which created them in circumcision and what it represented.*LBG 54.3*

"If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Here we have another of Paul's important sub-conclusions, growing out of his argument. These poor Galatians had been made to believe, and myriads of others have been in the same danger, that they "*must be circumcised*," and "keep the law of Moses," in order to be "Abraham's seed." So these had been turned away to "another gospel." But Paul had shown by this very process of reasoning that faith in Christ, the promised "seed" of Abraham, would make them heirs of Abraham such as the promise really had in view. Hence circumcision and the "law of Moses" was all unnecessary. They were no longer "under" them.*LBG 54.4*

Chapter 4:1: "Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;*LBG 55.1*

"2. But is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the father,*LBG 55.2*

"3. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world;*LBG 55.3*

"4. But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.*LBG 55.4*

"5. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*LBG 55.5*

"6. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his

Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*LBG 55.6*

“7. Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*LBG 55.7*

“8. Howbeit, then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.*LBG 55.8*

“9. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?*LBG 55.9*

“10. Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.*LBG 55.10*

“11. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.”*LBG 55.11*

In the first verses of this quotation, the apostle again brings to view the provisional nature of this added law, as he did in the scriptures recently noticed. He illustrates the subject by the case of an heir, who, as long as he remaineth a child, is really in the same condition as a servant. He is under tutors and governors until he reaches the age of maturity, when he is an independent freeman, to go forth and perform work suitable to those who have reached the stage of manhood. He “is *under* tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage *under* the elements of the world.” This continued until a certain time was reached, “the fullness of time,” when “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made *under* the law, to redeem them that were *under* the law.” Here are certain expressions which have a very important bearing on the argument concerning the law in Galatians. In Paul’s illustration we see the Jewish people were “under the elements of the world,” even as the minor was “under tutors and governors,” till “the fullness of time was come.” This point of time is the very same as that when Christ was made “under the law, to redeem them that were under the law” spoken of in the previous chapter. It is plain, therefore, that being under the “elements of the world,” and “under the law,” here are precisely the same thing. The use the apostle makes of the pronoun “we” is also significant, evidently referring to himself and his people previous to

the coming of “the fullness of time.” When he comes to speak of the Galatians, he says “ye,” in each case. Those whom he speaks of as “we,” were in a state of minority, children, “under the elements of the world,” till “the fullness of time was come,” that we might receive the adoption of sons.” They could not receive this full “adoption” till the promised “seed” came. Then when they became Christ’s, they were adopted as a part of Abraham’s seed.*LBG 55.12*

What are these “elements” which the apostle speaks of, in which they were in bondage until God sent forth his Son made under the law? Are they the commandments of God, the law of liberty, that holy, pure law which will be the rule in the Judgment? We think this would be a conclusion most absurd. We claim with great confidence that these “elements” refer to a different system. The original word is defined by Greenfield:” Elementary instruction, first principles, the lowest rudiments in knowledge, science, etc.” The word is translated “rudiments” in the revised version and in the Diaglott. The same word occurs in *Colossians 2:20*, where it is translated “rudiments:” “Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to, ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not),” etc. These words occur just after he had been speaking of “blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and” taking “it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;” saying also, “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” It is very plain therefore that the apostle in Colossians, is speaking of the rudiments of the world,-the same expression precisely in the original as we have in Galatians,-refers to matters connected with the ceremonial law. He also states that their being under these “elements,” or rudiments, brought them into “bondage.”*LBG 56.1*

How plain it is that these “elements” are the same as the law of which Paul speaks in *Galatians 5:1*: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing!” Also as the law spoken of by the apostle Peter in *Acts 5:10*, in the famous Council:

“Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?” referring, as every one knows, to the law of Moses, circumcision, etc.; also to that mentioned in *Colossians 2:14*: “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us.” In all of these scriptures, the reference is unmistakably to a law of temporary duration, onerous, burdensome, and different from the gospel of free salvation through Christ, the ritual law and not the moral.*LBG 57.1*

The parallel condition under these rudiments cannot refer to the individual experience of persons but must refer to the condition in which all were placed until “the fullness of the time was come when God sent forth his Son. It would be preposterous to say of each individual person in a condition of sinfulness, under the condemnation of the moral law, that he should remain in that condition until “the fullness of the time” was reached when God should send forth his Son, made under the law. That expression refers to the full development of Christ as the Messiah; but it is eminently applicable when spoken of the Israelites before Christ’s gospel was preached. They were in the position of children under mere rudimentary instruction, awaiting the fullness of time when God should send forth his Son with great effulgence of light. Their instruction was in shadows and ceremonies, all pointing forward to the time when God should send forth his Son.*LBG 57.2*

This scripture we understand to be parallel in many respects with the statement in the preceding chapter, where the added law is spoken of, which was to last “till the seed should come;” and with that statement in *verse 23 of chapter 3*, where they were “shut up [kept in ward] unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.” When these temporary provisions had reached their consummation, and the fullness of time had come, then the temporary gave place to the permanent, the shadowy to the substance, the condition of childhood to that of manhood; and the middle wall of partition passing away, all could now become one in Christ Jesus, a child of God of the seed of Abraham, who had received the adoption of sons of God, God giving them special witness in the pouring out of his Spirit. They were no longer servants under a temporary arrangement, but heirs of God through Christ.*LBG 58.1*

In *verse 4*, where Paul speaks of God's sending forth his Son, made of a woman, we have the expression "made under the law." We have already considered the meaning of this term, "under the law," and have clearly shown that it does not always mean under the condemnation of the law, but rather under the authority of the law, or under obligation to keep it. The term evidently has this meaning here. Both the revised version and the Diaglott translate "made under the law," "*born* under the law." Greenfield, in the definition of the original word, which has a great variety of significations, quotes its use in this fourth verse with the definition, "subject to the law." This evidently is the correct sense in which it should be used. It is not true that our Saviour was born under the condemnation of the law of God. This would be manifestly absurd. That he did voluntarily take the sins of the world upon him in his great sacrifice upon the cross, we admit; but he was not *born* under its condemnation. Of him that was pure, and had never committed a sin in his life, it would be an astonishing perversion of all proper theology to say he was born under the condemnation of God's law. *LBG 58.2*

But how clearly and forcibly this applies to the facts in his life; if we understand it as referring to his *being subject to* the Mosaic law. He was born as a Jew, was circumcised when eight days old, and his parents went through the accustomed days of purification, according to the law of Moses. They presented the child as their firstborn, as the law required, and offered as a sacrifice a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons. He lived under all the ceremonies and observances of the law of Moses the same as did the other Jews. Thus he was "*born* under the law," and subject to it. All his life he was careful not to break any of its provisions, and he never permitted his disciples to do it to the day of his death. He even refused to labor especially for the Gentiles, because he was sent to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." How plainly we see, then, that he was "made under the law;" that is, subject to the law the same as others, that he might "redeem them that were under the law." "He came unto his own [the Jewish people], and his own received him not." And we cannot doubt that had they received him, a way would have been provided by which that nation would have been greatly honored, and all the Gentiles would have come to their knowledge of Christ through God's adopted people. But they

rejected him, and this made the way to the Gentiles still more free than it would have been. So we see great force in this expression of Christ's being under the law; that is, subject to its requirements.*LBG 59.1*

God had honored the Hebrew nation by separating them out from the world by those peculiar institutions of which circumcision was the sign, and ordained that the true children of Christ should come through them, and gave them the greatest light of all others, that they might have no excuse, but be honored of God, if they would accept the Messiah. His great desire was to redeem them from sin those who were under or subject to that law. This was the desire of Paul also, and he would have been willing to give even his life if he could but save his own nation. But in their stubbornness, exclusiveness, and supercilious ideas of themselves as the only people whom God could honor, they lost the blessing which they might have obtained by humbly accepting Christ. All these "elements," or rudiments, of knowledge which they obtained by means of the typical system, pointed them forward to the precious blessings which came through the knowledge and acceptance of the Son of God.*LBG 59.2*

This expression "under the law" in *verse 4*, is evidently used in precisely the same sense as "under tutors and governors," in *verse 2*. "Under tutors and governors" does not mean under their condemnation, or frown, or rod of punishment; no, not by any means; but under their protection, guidance, authority, etc. So Christ was made, or born, under the law (that is, subject to it) in the same sense that they were under tutors and governors. This is in the same sense as the word is used in *chap. 3:23*: "Before faith came, we were kept under the law;" that is, subject to it, shut up with it, until the time when Christ should come. The apostle's illustration of their previous condition under the ceremonial law, as a child under tutors and governors, is a most forcible evidence that our position is correct that the law in Galatians refers to the ceremonial system, and cannot possibly refer to the moral law. The language concerning "elements of the world"— these "weak and beggarly elements" to which they desired to return, under which they had been in servitude— it is utterly inconsistent to apply to the law which is "spiritual," "holy, just, and good."*LBG 60.1*

After having spoken in the first verse of the chapter of the condition of God's people previous to the coming of Christ, in *verse 6* he makes his argument applicable to the Galatians, to whom he was writing. They had become converted, had become "sons." God had sent forth his Spirit into their hearts, so they could cry, "Abba Father." Now they were no longer servants to go back to that old provisional system; hence their course in following the teachings of these Jews was all out of place. They were heirs of God through Christ when they received the gospel. In *verses 3-11* we have an interesting point noticed, as follows: "Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods; but now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." We claim this language to be a very strong evidence of the truthfulness of our position, and therefore wholly inconsistent with the position that our friends take that this law is the law of God. But to avoid this conclusion, they even argue that the "weak and beggarly elements" and the observance of "days, and months, and times, and years" has reference to heathen customs and not to those of the ceremonial law. We cannot accept this view of the subject; for we feel sure it is not the truth. The language clearly shows that the persons referred to had in some period of their lives been the worshipers of other gods. This we admit. We also admit that some of the Galatians were of this class. But these admissions do not by any means necessitate the conclusion our friends would draw from this scripture. *LBG 60.2*

Our position is, that these persons referred to here were proselytes. We present a brief argument on this subject to make our position clear. No intelligent student of history will deny that at the time of Christ's advent, and for a generation preceding that event, there were most earnest efforts made by the Jewish people to proselyte Gentiles to their faith. From the time of the Babylonian captivity, they had been largely scattered among all the nations around about Palestine. They were an enterprising and commercial people, as they always have been. Scarcely any nation could have stood the persecution and hatred that have followed them, and yet maintained themselves as a distinct people, as the Jews have in almost every

part of the earth. Comparatively few of the nation ever returned from captivity to Judea to make it their home. Vast multitudes would come from nearly every part of the Roman Empire on the feast days, so much so that even more than a million would often be in and encamped around the holy city. There was scarcely a nation of any importance with whom the Jews did not trade and carry on the avocations of life. Their synagogues were established in the leading cities. Any one who has read the Acts of the Apostles knows that in every prominent place where Paul went to labor, he entered the synagogue of the Jews first. These synagogues were, of course, established in the midst of an idolatrous population whose religious systems were unreasonable and absurd. Many of the more sensible people became attached to these Jewish synagogues, and attended them to learn of the true God.*LBG 61.1*

This is evidently one great reason why God permitted his people to be scattered in all these countries. He placed them in the land of Palestine, which was like a bridge, or open pathway, through which the nations of the earth traveled to and fro between Egypt, Assyria, and the other nations of the earth. This was done that his law might enlighten the people of the world. When the Israelites went into captivity, and saw that their idolatry and neglect of God's law had brought his frown upon them, they became more zealous, so they never lapsed into idolatry again; and, being scattered throughout the nations of the world, they prepared the way for the advent of the Messiah.*LBG 61.2*

That the Jews had a disposition to proselyte, there can be no question. Our Saviour said of them, "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte." *Matthew 23:15*. This language shows the intense interest they had in the work of making people favorable to their views. The reason of this can be seen at a glance, when we consider that they were scattered among the different nations, and their vocations in life were at the mercy of the heathen around them; they would naturally desire to have them take a favorable view of their religion, and be interested in it. Some of them might proselyte for the purpose of saving their souls; but selfish motives evidently actuated these of whom our Saviour speaks, for they made them even more the children of hell than themselves. Their success in proselyting is evident from many scriptures; even some

eminent persons like the queen of Sheba in the Old Testament, and Candace in the New Testament (*Acts* 8:27), and King Izates, with his queen, Helena, as mentioned by Josephus, are royal representatives. Conybeare and Howson, in their "Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul," speak concerning the extent of this work of proselyting, as follows:—*LBG* 62.1

"During the time of the Maccabees, some alien tribes were forcibly incorporated with the Jews. This was the case with the Itureans, and probably with the Moabites, and, above all, with the Edomites, with whose name that of the Herodian family is historically connected. How far Judaism extended among the vague collection of tribes called Arabians, we can only conjecture from the curious history of the Homerites, and from the actions of such chieftains as Aretas (2 *Corinthians* 11:32). But as we travel toward the west and north, into countries better known, we find no lack of evidence of the moral effect of the synagogues, with their worship of Jehovah and their prophecies of the Messiah." There are numerous instances in the Acts of the Apostles where we see that these views are indicated.*LBG* 62.2

Nicholas of Antioch, one of the seven deacons, was a proselyte. *Acts* 6:5. There were vast multitudes of Greeks attending worship at Jerusalem, many of whom were evidently proselytes. In *Acts* 13:50 we read: "But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas." These were evidently of the same class. Timothy was really a proselyte, and it cannot be doubted that the way the apostle gained access to the Gentiles, was largely through the interest many of them had in the worship of the synagogues. This was the case in nearly every city into which they entered. These proselytes were of two classes, as any one may see by examining the Dictionaries, or Cruden's large Concordance. One class, called the "proselytes of justice," were those who *fully* accepted the teachings of the Jews, being circumcised, offering sacrifices, etc., according to the law of Moses. But a far larger class were called "proselytes of the gate;" that is, those who regarded God and the Bible, and obeyed the moral principles of its teachings, separating themselves from the Gentile heathen customs, and worshiping the true God. Such men as Cornelius, the centurion, and vast numbers

of others in all parts of the Gentile world where the Jewish religion was known, were of this class.*LBG 63.1*

Smith, his Unabridged Dictionary of the Bible, Conybeare and Howson, Barnes, in his Notes, and others all agree that a large number of Jews settled in Galatia a century or two earlier than Paul's time, so that the whole country became familiar with Jewish ideas and the Bible religion. Having the same disposition to proselyte as their brethren in other parts of the country, we cannot doubt, therefore, but that a large number of this class were "proselytes of the gate," and were ready for the labors of Paul, and were of that number who received the gospel with great joy. They had been, as *verse 8* indicates, at one time those who "did service unto them which by nature are no gods; "that is, had known something of the true God, but had not fully identified themselves with the Jewish customs. They had regarded their rites and ceremonies with respect, and had in a measure separated themselves from idolatry. Conybeare and Howson state that there were large numbers of this class of proselytes scattered all through the Roman Empire, especially in the countries around Syria, etc. They say: "Under this term we include at present all those who were attracted in various degrees of intensity toward Judaism—from those who by circumcision had obtained full access to all the privileges of the temple worship, to those who, only professed a general respect for the Mosaic religion, and attended as hearers in the synagogues. Many proselytes were attached to the Jewish communities wherever they were dispersed."—*Page 28*. Dr. Clarke, in his comments on Galatians, in several places speaks of there being many proselytes among the disciples. He says: "The Jewish religion was general in the region of Galatia, and it was respected, as it appears that the principal inhabitants were either Jews or proselytes." Again, "Judaism was popular, and the more converts the false teachers could make, the more occasion for glorying they had. They wished to get these Christian converts who had been before *proselytes of the gate*, to receive circumcision that they might glory in their flesh. 'Behold my converts!' Thus they gloried or boasted, not that the people were converted to God, but that they were circumcised." Large numbers of these proselytes no doubt received the gospel from Paul, and enjoyed its liberty, and the Spirit of God enabled them to cry, "Abba, Father."*LBG 63.2*

But after he went away, those Judaizing teachers came with their usual burden—"Except ye be circumcised," and "keep the law of Moses," "ye cannot be saved." This filled Paul's heart with great sadness; for, as we, have seen, he had met this thing ever since his conversion, and nearly lost his life several times because of this bitter, exclusive spirit. So he writes this letter to the Galatians; and calling their attention to these facts, he says: "How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" *LBG 64.1*

Our friends will struggle hard to escape the conclusion that these "weak and beggarly elements" refer to the ceremonial law; but in reason we can come to no other conclusion. They are evidently the same as the "rudiments" under which God's people were held, mentioned in the third verse. They brought them into the same bondage, as brought to view in the fifth chapter, where the apostle pleads with them not to be "entangled again with the yoke of bondage," as they would be if they were circumcised, in which case Christ would profit them nothing. *LBG 64.2*

This is evidently the same "yoke" which Peter speaks of in the *15th chapter of Acts*, when the same subject was under consideration. In this epistle the apostle had not been saying one word about Gentile customs, or Gentile observances, or heathen, worship or services, or anything of the sort; he had simply made reference in the verse above to the fact that they had been at a certain time heathen. This, of course, was true in their case, seeing they had become proselytes. But he constantly refers, from the beginning to the end of this epistle, to the Mosaic system, circumcision, etc.; and we cannot believe that Paul was so poor a logician that he would strike off here on something entirely foreign to the subject he was bringing before the Galatians. *LBG 65.1*

The identification of these "elements of the world"—these "I weak and beggarly elements" into which the Galatians desired to return into bondage—with the ceremonial law, is an important link in this argument. There can be no question but that our position on this point is correct. Dr. Schaff, in his comments on these "*rudiments*," says: "According to my view, the expression applies in any case only to Judaism, especially to the law (an apostle Paul could not

possibly comprehend heathenism and Judaism under one idea, regarding them thus as virtually equivalent).” We trust our friends who sometimes endeavor to apply these “rudiments” partially to heathenism, will consider this well.*LBG 65.2*

Dr. Clarke says, “On rudiments of the world,” “the rudiments or principles of the Jewish religion.” He says, also, that the “weak and beggarly elements were the ceremonies of the Mosaic law.” Dr. Scott takes the same position. It would certainly be little better than blasphemy to apply such terms to that law which God has said is “perfect,” “spiritual,” “holy, just, and good.” And by no consistent reasoning can they be made to apply to the Gentile idolatry, as that is not the subject of the apostle’s reasoning in this epistle. But these expressions are every way consistent with his language when speaking of the ceremonial law.*LBG 65.3*

“Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.” These are precisely the things Paul refers to in *Colossians 2:16*, just before he speaks of the “rudiments,” in *verse 20*. “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days,” etc. These Galatians under their Judaizing teachers were becoming all absorbed in these old shadows pointing forward to Christ, after the substance had come, thus really denying Christ; for if the shadow was to be observed, certainly the substance had not come. No wonder he says, “I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.” We claim that this is the only logical, reasonable view of this argument of Paul’s.*LBG 66.1*

But how could we apply these expressions to the moral law? Could we say that these days which they observed were seventh-day Sabbaths, which made the apostle fearful of them. This would be excellent for our Antinomian friends; for it is just such texts as these that they try to refer to the ten commandments. Our friends would thus give them great aid and comfort. Are the “weak and beggarly elements” here presented the terms by which Paul describes the moral law? It is evident that the Galatians desired to go back into obedience to something, and thus place themselves under bondage. Was it obedience to the law of God? They observed something, that is, rendered obedience to it—“days, and months,

and times, and years.” Surely this does not refer to the moral law. We know our friends will undertake to apply these to the heathen rites and ceremonies, and thus throw the apostle’s argument all out of connection with his whole theme; but this we have seen is inadmissible. He complains of these persons for *obedience* to something which they ought not to obey. He is not speaking about their being justified by their good works because they did not lie, steal, murder, etc.; that is not his subject at all; but it certainly is about going back to a law which was abolished.*LBG 66.2*

Verse 12: “Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.*LBG 66.3*

“13. Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.*LBG 66.4*

“14. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.*LBG 67.1*

“15. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.*LBG 67.2*

“16. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?*LBG 67.3*

“17. They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.*LBG 67.4*

“18. But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.*LBG 67.5*

“19. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,*LBG 67.6*

“20. I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.”*LBG 67.7*

Paul now gives an affectionate turn to his argument, setting before them his infirmities, temptations, devotion to their interests, and

faithfulness in laboring in their behalf. He talks to them from a personal stand-point, pleading with them affectionately, to obtain once more their sympathies against those Judaizing teachers who were perverting the truth in their midst. They had once loved him so that they would have even plucked out their eyes for him; but through these teachers they had lost their interest for him. He refers to these Judaizing teachers in *verse 17*: "They zealously affect you, but not well;" or, as the Diaglott has it, "They show affection toward you, but not honorably." The thought is plainly this, that these teachers by making a great show of love by flattery and pretense, wished to draw the affections of the disciples toward themselves, and shut Paul out of their affections; and evidently they had succeeded. But Paul reasoned with them to show them how much he had suffered for them, and endeavored to call them back again to the truth—all those whom he had brought out with great self-sacrifice. They had once been willing to pluck out their eyes for him; but now they almost regarded him as an enemy, through the miserable influence of these Judaizing teachers, who had followed Paul everywhere with the same object, and added bitterness to his life. Can we believe that these hypocritical teachers were intensely interested to get these Galatians to refrain, from murder, Sabbath-breaking, adultery, covetousness, etc.? This conclusion, of course, is too preposterous for any one to believe; but they evidently were trying to get them to do, something. It was not merely to have a mental view that they were justified by obeying the ten commandments that they were teaching them about. There is no hint in any part of the Bible that these teachers had any such a purpose as this. But they were trying to exalt that exclusive Mosaic system that had made them a peculiar people, that yoke of bondage which had passed away at the cross. Paul was in great perplexity in regard to these Galatian disciples, to know what they were going to do. His soul travailed with an anxious burden in their behalf, until Christ should be again fully accepted, and the shadowy system of types be left behind.*LBG 67.8*

Verse 21: "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?*LBG 68.1*

"22. For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond maid, the other by a free woman.*LBG 68.2*

“23. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise.*LBG 68.3*

“24. Which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants: the one from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.*LBG 68.4*

“25. For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.*LBG 68.5*

“26. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.*LBG 68.6*

“27. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath a husband.*LBG 68.7*

“28. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.*LBG 68.8*

“29. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.*LBG 68.9*

“30. Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman.*LBG 68.10*

“31. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.”*LBG 68.11*

Chapter 5:1 “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*LBG 69.1*

“2. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.*LBG 69.2*

“3. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.*LBG 69.3*

“4. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are

justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*LBG 69.4*

“5. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”*LBG 69.5*

“Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?” Here we have the expression “under the law” repeated once more. We have already dwelt at some length upon this phrase, and have claimed that its uses in the letter to the Galatians referred to being subject to the law, under its authority. But one of our friends who is enthusiastic in his devotion to the view that the law in Galatians is the moral law, goes so far as to claim that in *every* case where this expression is used, it signifies “being in a state of sin or condemnation;” *i.e.*, in a position where the penalty of the law hangs over one’s head. That penalty is the “second death” in “the lake of fire.” We have, then., according to that view, these Galatian brethren desiring to be in a state of guilt, which would expose them to the lake of fire. “Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law,” with this equivalent expression substituted, would read, Tell me, ye that desire to be under the condemnation of the law—Tell me, ye that desire the condemnation of the second death. We have known men to desire many strange things, but we never before knew one to desire the second death. But if that view of the subject is correct, and this law is the moral law, and all these expressions “under the law” mean under its condemnation, then we have no possible escape from this conclusion. But to think of these new, zealous converts to Christianity desiring to go into a state of condemnation exposed to such a doom is too preposterous for a moment’s consideration. But to such absurdities do these positions drive us.*LBG 69.6*

The true position, that these Galatians desired to go back and place themselves under obligation to keep the ceremonial law, involves no such conclusion. It is manifestly in harmony with all the apostle’s reasoning.*LBG 69.7*

“Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?” Having noticed the first part of the expression, we also notice the latter part—“do ye not hear the law?” He then quotes from the book of Genesis the story of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar as an

allegory. Here the word “law” is used to include the book of Genesis. Certainly this could not mean the moral law, but must include that book of the law containing all the requirements of the Mosaic dispensation. The original law of circumcision constantly referred to in this epistle, stands in close connection with this story of Hagar in this book of Genesis. The term “the law” among the Jews generally included the five books of Moses, thus including the whole system, moral, ritual, typical, and civil. This *system* these Judaizing teachers desired to maintain. Circumcision was a sign of the whole. We believe that so far as being obligatory upon Christians, all was abolished except the ten commandments and the principles which grew out of them. When Paul says, “Ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?” is not the law they were to *hear* the same as the one they desired to be *under*? But the law they were to “hear” was not the ten commandments, but that which embraced the whole Mosaic system. The law here referred to cannot therefore be the moral law. *LBG 70.1*

As another illustration of his argument, he now calls attention to the facts connected with Abraham’s two marriages with Sarah and Hagar. He tells us this history is an “allegory,” *i.e.*, as Clarke says, “more being intended, in the account than meets the eye.” The original word has just this meaning. What, then, is this hidden meaning which the inspired apostle has discovered in this simple narrative?—That Hagar and Sarah spiritually represented the two covenants. “The one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.” This “answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.” This covenant must embrace all those peculiar separating ordinances embraced in the middle wall of partition. It must have special reference to the “added” law concerning which he has been all the time speaking, else he would entirely diverge from his line of argument, and his conclusions be illogical, disconnected from his premises.” Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?” Then immediately he introduces this illustration of the two covenants. It has direct reference to the conclusion in *the first verses of chapter 5*. Those in that covenant were “in bondage” with their children. The covenant itself “gendereth to bondage,” *i.e.*, “bringing forth” or “bearing children for servitude or bondage” (revised version and Diaglott). Hence the conclusion of his argument, “Stand fast

therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage,”— the “yoke” which Peter says “neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.” We can but conclude, then, that this covenant which brings forth children to bondage embraces the law of circumcision and all it represented. The services connected with this covenant centered at Jerusalem. All its sacrifices must be made there. Its feasts were observed there. Every Jew constantly prayed with his face toward that city, and his wailings and longings, pilgrimages and devotions, all pivot on old Jerusalem, even until this day. All this is shadowed forth in the covenant represented in Hagar. But Sarah, the true wife, represents the glorious freedom and precious blessings of the new covenant. The New Jerusalem is our holy city. This is “above,” and it is “the mother of us all.” We are the children of the “promise” if we have come under the new covenant even as Isaac was.*LBG 70.2*

The promise of the “seed” was through Israel. Some of our good brethren think the promise of the “seed” is still future, that the “seed” has not come yet. If the promise of the “seed” is not fulfilled yet, then the covenant of liberty represented by Sarah, which this promised “seed” was to make, has certainly not yet gone into force. So our friends, we suppose, are still under the old covenant of bondage, represented by Hagar. We should pity them greatly if their own theory was true. But we are thankful we have glad tidings for them. The Seed *has* come. We, and we trust they, are the children of the New Jerusalem. We hope to save them in spite of their theories. Is it possible anyone can believe that this covenant which is represented by Hagar, and “gendereth to bondage,” is a proper illustration God’s holy law? Does it “answer to Jerusalem” which is in bondage with her children?*LBG 71.1*

Then comes the grand conclusion of the argument of the apostle, not only of the immediate connection, but of all he has said in the whole epistle thus far. We have referred to it several times, but we are sure it will be in place again.” Stand fast *therefore* in the *liberty* wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that *if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing*. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that, he is a debtor *to do the whole law*. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are

justified by the law; *ye are fallen from grace.*” These are strong, emphatic, most powerful words. They would never have been called out from the meek apostle except a great crisis existed. The very foundation of the gospel system was involved in this question of circumcision. If they were circumcised, they were debtors “to do the *whole law.*” Circumcision was the sign of the whole Mosaic system. They must offer sacrifices, regard the special laws concerning uncleanness, maintain the old wall of separation between themselves and all the rest of mankind, making the progress of the gospel in its beneficent mission of blessing all the nations of the earth excessively hard, and virtually denying the gospel itself. For when they did all these things, they virtually said: “Christ has not come;” for it would be impossible to do, the work prophecy had said his coming would accomplish, if this fearful dead weight were hung to the gospel. And above all, if salvation was to be obtained through these old abrogated laws, then the death of Christ was *not sufficient* to save men who might repent and believe on him. These false teachers said: “Ye cannot be saved” “except ye be circumcised” and “keep the law of Moses.” So circumcision and the law of Moses was the real saviour, and not the death of Christ.*LBG 72.1*

It is not to be supposed that these proselytes in Galatia realized all the consequences of their action until Paul explained it to them, nor did thousands of others to whom these Judaizing teachers had access. This made it necessary for God to raise up Paul, whose education, early life, thorough understanding of Judaism, conversion, and wonderful spiritual illumination fully equipped him to be an apostle to the Gentiles. Years passed after Christ’s death before the gospel had made much impression on the heathen world. The influences centering in Jerusalem seemed to stand in the way of the Gentile branch of the work. Such large numbers of Jewish converts seem to have been affected with Jewish prejudices, that it required a clearheaded, strong man to undertake this gigantic task. They followed him in every place to introduce their exclusive notions. Christians in that age could see and feel these things as we cannot now.*LBG 72.2*

The reason why our brethren err in their application of the law in Galatians, is because they fail to grasp the tremendous importance of the issue involved in apostolic times in Judaism and the

questions growing out of it. They reason from the standpoint of certain questions of the present day: But these concluding words of the apostle's argument show how important he regarded this question. The language unmistakably refers to the Mosaic law, and cannot by any possibility be twisted to refer to the moral law. "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." Ye are debtors "to do the whole law." "Be *not* entangled again with the yoke of *bondage*." "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; *ye are fallen from grace.*" *LBG 73.1*

The apostle's intense interest in this question, is not only shown by these expressions, but by others in the epistle, as we have seen, referring to the same subject: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." Those that "trouble" you "would *pervert* the gospel of Christ." "Oh foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?" "Are ye so foolish?" "Are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" "I would they were *even cut off* which trouble you." Some try to make this expression mean something very mild, and fail to sense the intense feelings of the apostle in view of the evil they were doing. They were "false brethren," who "came in *privily*," in a secret, underhanded manner, to destroy their liberty and bring the whole gospel system into "bondage." Paul says of those who preach another gospel, Let them "be accursed." Their course was ruinous to souls, destroying the very way of salvation through Christ, putting aside God's merciful provisions for the blessing of the nations of the earth, to hold them in their narrow, exclusive circle, and exalt the selfish, supercilious Jewish spirit to bring all men to acknowledge the superiority of these Jews who in their selfish egotism had forfeited God's favor by stubbornness, rebellion, and putting to death his Son. *LBG 73.2*

Paul found many evils to complain of in the different churches. Among the Corinthians he found great immoralities and various forms of error which were very serious. So of other churches. But not one of them calls forth such words of condemnation as this, and so many of them in the same space. Why is this?—Because, though the evils in the other churches were serious, yet, they did not so fully undermine the very principles of the gospel as did the positions which Paul here combated. These were radical,

fundamental errors.*LBG 74.1*

Paul's grand conclusion of his argument in these verses must have maddened the whole force of Judaizing teachers, and made their work much more difficult. Wherever these words were read, these teachers would not be able to influence the Gentile disciples as before. We believe this Epistle to the Galatians was a grand turning-point in this whole controversy which had so long affected the church, making the call of a great Council necessary, and constantly interfering with the apostle's work among the Gentiles. The whole question was now elucidated. We further notice a few points before proceeding to other scriptures.*LBG 74.2*

"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." This verse is often separated from its connection, and used as having a bearing upon our personal justification by faith for our transgressions of the moral law. Now justification by faith is one of the grandest and most glorious doctrines of the gospel of Christ. We love, delight, and rejoice in that precious truth second to none. We know Paul has explained it as no other writer in all the Bible has, in Romans and other epistles. No man can be saved by his good works alone. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." We are weak and utterly helpless of ourselves, covered with pollution, and never can remove our guilt and uncleanness by present or future efforts of obedience. Indeed, we are utterly weak and helpless; and if our sins *have* been forgiven, we must have constant faith in and help from a crucified Saviour, constant access to his unfailing fountain of strength, in order to obtain any real help or accomplish anything whatever that will meet God's favor in the line of good works. All this and vastly more we cheerfully acknowledge and most fully believe. Yet the most careless reader ought to see that the apostle in speaking of being "justified by the law" in this connection, is not speaking of being justified through obedience to the *moral* law. Such a view would make the statement utterly foreign to the words in its immediate connection, both before and after. He has just said that if they be circumcised, Christ shall profit them nothing: that they are in that case debtors "to do the whole law." Christ becomes of no effect. "Ye are fallen from grace." They plainly looked to their obedience to these dead, lifeless ceremonies connected with

circumcision as that which would make them just or justified; that is, bring them to a savable condition; whereas they could only be made such by faith in Christ. For this reason, looking away from the only fountain opened for uncleanness, away from the only name that could save, to that law of bondage, they had “fallen from” the grace of Christ.*LBG 74.3*

We see, therefore, that in the expression “justified by the law,” it is as necessary here to know of what law he is speaking as it is anywhere in the New Testament when speaking of a law that is binding or abolished. The same expression “justified by the works of the law,” is evidently used in the same sense in *chap. 2:16*, as the connection shows. Indeed, it is evident that for forgiveness and justification for their transgressions of the moral law, many of the Jews had always looked to the works required by the typical law. It was for this purpose that it was added, because of transgression. Only the few, the spiritual-minded, saw its true design. Hence they were even more in danger of looking to obedience to its requirements for their justification than to obedience to the ten commandments. So Paul exposes its utter worthlessness now that Christ had come and died.*LBG 75.1*

Another point: Who will dare say that the law Paul speaks of in chapter 4 is not the same as the one he reasons upon in chapter 3? They must be the same. Will any dare claim that the conclusions presented *in the first verses of chapter 5* are not the consequence of his argument drawn from the words preceding, in chapter 4? Then they must also have reference to the same law in *chapter 3*. But the moral law cannot possibly be the one considered in *chapter 4*; therefore the law *in chapter 3* cannot be the moral law.*LBG 75.2*

Verse 6: “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*LBG 76.1*

“7. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?*LBG 76.2*

“8. This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.*LBG 76.3*

“9. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*LBG 76.4*

“10. I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.*LBG 76.5*

“11. And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offense of the cross ceased.*LBG 76.6*

“12. I would they were even cut off which trouble you.*LBG 76.7*

“13. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.*LBG 76.8*

“14. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”*LBG 76.9*

Chapter 6:12: “As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.*LBG 76.10*

“13. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.*LBG 76.11*

“14. But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*LBG 76.12*

“15. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.”*LBG 76.13*

We omit the remaining portion of the Galatian letter, as it wholly refers to practical Christian duties, and does not relate to the subject we are considering. In *chap. 5:6* Paul states the utter uselessness of circumcision so far as the religion of Christ Jesus is concerned. It alone considered would make no difference. A man would need to repent and believe on Christ just the same, whether he was circumcised or not. It was only when these Judaizing teachers were trying to bring in circumcision and all it represented as necessary to salvation, that Paul felt stirred up to vigorously combat it. In *verse 7* he refers to the zeal with which they received

the gospel, and to the fact that some one had hindered them, driven them back (margin), so now they did not obey the truth as before. These were unauthorized, self-appointed teachers, who had no real connection with him who had called them; that is, Christ. They were not really the friends of Christ. The whole church was in danger; for a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. But Paul had still hopes of the Galatian church, that they would return to their allegiance to the truth. In *verse 13* he speaks of the liberty in Christ to which the brethren had been called, and cautions them to use this liberty not for an occasion of the flesh, but “by love” to “serve one another.” The Christian, liberty never leads to fleshly gratifications. “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Having just shown by the most incontrovertible argument that the ceremonial and typical system of the Mosaic service was abolished, all that remained of the law relating to our fellow-men was simply fulfilled in this: “Thou shalt ‘love thy neighbor as thyself’—the substance of our obedience to the law of God so far as it relates to our fellow-men.*LBG 76.14*

In *verses 11, 12*, we have a very interesting point again forcibly presented, to which we have referred several times in this argument; viz., the malice with which disciples affected by the Judaizing doctrines, and the Jews themselves, followed Paul. And it would seem from this language that the whole reason of the special bitterness of the Jewish people toward him was because he did not preach circumcision or give it any countenance. If he had done that, they would have let him comparatively alone. But when they saw that he took the course he did, they followed him from city to city, making his life bitter. And of these pretended brethren, who claimed to be disciples, who thus misled the Galatian church, he said that he would that they were “even cut off” because they undermined the gospel system. This cutting off can refer to nothing less than excommunication, and it may signify utter destruction, judging from past references, as we have seen in the first chapter a solemn curse pronounced upon those who were, perverting the gospel. This shows how weighty a question the apostle considered this whole subject to be.*LBG 77.1*

Before we close this argument, we wish to impress this point more fully, to convince our friends, if possible, who hold the opposite

view, that this question of circumcision in the apostolic church was not one of minor importance but in its effects upon the progress of Christianity and the presentation of gospel truth, was equal in the apostle's mind to even the much-vaunted doctrine of justification by faith. As we have said, we hold the latter to be a very important doctrine. But the special thing with which the apostle had to contend in his work among the Gentiles, was to show the proper relation between his work and the old system that was passing away.*LBG 78.1*

Let us trace this subject to show how bitterly the Jews contended against the idea of an equality before God of the Gentiles with themselves, which was the great point involved. If circumcision passed away, all could see that they stood on the same level; for circumcision represented that whole system, and was the wall of separation dividing between the Jews and the Gentiles.*LBG 78.2*

We will commence with the case of Cornelius, a devout man who feared God. Evidently God saw that Peter would not dare go to preach to Cornelius unless he gave him, special light to open the way, even though he was a man of good repute. So he gave Cornelius a vision to send for Peter, and Peter a vision to prepare him to go, letting down the various kinds of unclean beasts in a sheet, and telling him to rise, slay, and eat. We know God poured out his Spirit upon Cornelius and the Gentiles, even before hands were laid upon them in this case. Peter had hardly returned to Jerusalem before he was taken to task for doing thus. *Acts 11:2*: "And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and did eat with them." This occurred quite, a number of years after the crucifixion of Christ and the abolition of the ceremonial law; so it must be evident that neither Peter nor any of the other apostles had been accustomed to do such a thing as this up to this point. They had not realized that the Gentiles were to receive light on the same terms as they. They had not laid aside their Jewish prejudices, or God would not have found it necessary to give this vision to open Peter's eyes. They had not yet comprehended the real breadth of the gospel. When Peter rehearsed his experience with Cornelius, all had to submit to it, as God's direction was so manifest in it.*LBG 78.3*

We do not discern any special bitterness on the part of the Jews shown to the apostles at Jerusalem, except among the leading men; and Herod's persecution seems to have been prompted by them. But as soon as Paul and Barnabas went among the Gentiles, then they were followed at every step by a dogged determination of the Jews to destroy them and break up their work. When they came to Antioch in Pisidia (*Acts 13*), after speaking at length to the Jews, the Gentiles, doubtless most of them being proselytes, came and desired to hear from them the next Sabbath. And the whole city came together. But the Jews, when they saw that the Gentiles were receiving light, and that they were attracted to this new teaching of the gospel, were exceedingly mad, as expressed in *verse 45*: "They were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming." The apostle did not make it necessary for these Gentiles to be circumcised, and thus failed to acknowledge the Jewish superiority. Nothing could have stirred the Jews more than this. When Paul finally told them that they would turn to the Gentiles, and labor for them, their anger knew no bounds. They stirred up devout women (*verse 50*), and the chief men, and raised a fearful persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their coast. The apostles fled to another city, Iconium (*chapter 14*), but the Jews followed them with such bitterness that they had to flee to Lystra and Derbe. But the Jews of Antioch and Iconium came after them, and persuaded the people, who stoned Paul, and left him for dead.*LBG 79.1*

Then follows that Council at Jerusalem to consider this subject, which, having noticed carefully, we pass, simply reminding the reader that this question was raised in the church itself, showing that Paul's work among the Gentiles had not only affected the Jews, but also the Jewish believers, who said, "Except ye be circumcised" and "keep the law of Moses," "ye cannot be saved." But God helped his servant to bring the matter around in such a way that a great triumph for the spread of the gospel was the result. After this, when Paul preached in Thessalonica (*chapter 17*), the Jews still followed him, mingling with the baser elements of the people, and set the whole city in an uproar. Paul had to flee again, and went unto Berea; but the Jews from Thessalonica immediately followed him to this place, and Paul again had to flee from them. After passing through Athens, and coming to Corinth, he labored with his usual

energy in behalf of the gospel, and continued there some time. But here again he met that bitter hatred of the Jews, and through their influence was summoned to appear before Gallio, the deputy of Achaia. What was the charge against the great apostle? In *chap. 18:13*, we find this accusation: "This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law." They even undertook to try him before the Roman deputy for his course in not sustaining the ceremonial law, as though it was a great crime. This reveals the special burden of the Jews against the apostle. After laboring a long time at Corinth, where the Jews did not have power because of their fear of the deputy, and did not dare molest him, he had great success. But as soon as he again appeared in Greece (*chapter 20*), the Jews lay in wait for him, and tried to kill him, but did not succeed. Paul expresses the situation in his talk with the elders of the church at Ephesus (*chap. 20:19*), and gives as the greatest cause of his persecution and difficulties which he had to meet, "the lying in wait of the Jews," who were constantly dogging his steps at every turn because he did not preach the ceremonial law. *LBG 79.2*

In his final, closing visit to Jerusalem, we have quite a vivid picture presented before us of the effect of this feeling, even in that church. No doubt Paul's anxiety to go to Jerusalem was prompted by his great desire to have a better state of feeling exist between the Jewish and Gentile Christians. He carried large gifts to them from his Gentile converts, hoping to appease their distrust and dislike by thus showing his regard for the poor. We can readily see that, this was a great crisis in the apostle's life. And what a source of sadness it must have been to a man like him,— who had given his life unreservedly to his Master, suffering every indignity, pain, imprisonment, and finally death itself,—to be forced to see that his labors were not appreciated, and that he himself was looked upon with distrust, even among excellent members at Jerusalem, the point from which the gospel had started. But he felt that if it was possible, this union between the two must be strengthened, and these feelings of distrust and dislike removed; so he made this trip to Jerusalem. He presented his gifts to show his love for them, and walked circumspectly in their midst. They received his gifts gladly at first, yet these feelings of dislike were not removed from their heart; for in *chap. 21:20, 21* we see these feelings quite manifest: "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which

believe; *and they are all zealous of the law*; and they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that *they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.*" *LBG 80.1*

Here we see the same old bitterness again, even in the church. Now they give some advice, that he should treat these customs which he had really discarded, with respect, by performing some of these services according to the law, and thus appear to recognize it. We fully believe that this was an inconsistent course for the apostle to take, and that these brethren in giving this advice yielded to the pressure that was brought to bear against Paul on account of the doctrines which he preached. This very advice to Paul was the cause of his long imprisonment, which deprived the church of his labors; and it was thus brought about by the advice of the disciples themselves. Paul, willing to give way to the very utmost extent consistent with principle if he could bring about peace between them, accepted their advice, and went into the temple to purify himself, and at quite a heavy expense paid the money required for four others who had vowed. *LBG 81.1*

It would have been better if Paul had kept away from this temple service; but God turned even this to good account, and made his servant useful even in prison. While performing this service, some Jews who had seen him elsewhere, stirred up the people against him, "crying out, Men of Israel, help; this is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place," etc. So we see that the great cause of their hatred most prominent again was that he did not teach the ceremonial law. We all know what followed, how Paul was captured from the mob by the authorities, and finally permitted to make a speech to the people; and when they heard him speak in Hebrew, we learn from *chapter 22* that they listened patiently until he reached the troublesome point: "And he said unto me, Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live." *Verses 21, 22.* They then threw dust into the air, and acted like mad men. *LBG 81.2*

How plain it must be to any candid mind that this question of

making the Gentiles equal to them by breaking down the ceremonial law, was the leading question in the whole matter of sending the gospel in the apostolic age outside of the Jews. It was not simply an insignificant question, though it may be considered as such today, when everything is changed from what it was centuries ago, at the very beginning of the gospel work. It was a question which was worthy of calling out an epistle from this great champion in the gospel.*LBG 82.1*

Sister White, in her “Sketches from the Life of Saint Paul” also dwells considerably upon this subject. On page 64 she says: “The Jews had prided themselves upon their divinely-appointed services; and they concluded that as God once specified the Hebrew manner of worship, it was impossible that he should ever authorize a change in any of its specifications. They decided that Christianity must connect itself with the Jewish laws and ceremonies. They were slow to discern to the end of that which had been abolished by the death of Christ, and perceive that all their sacrificial offerings had but prefigured the death of the Son of God, in which type had met its antitype, rendering valueless the divinely-appointed ceremonies and sacrifices of the Jewish religion.”*LBG 82.2*

In speaking of the causes which led to the Council at Jerusalem (*Acts 15*) in which she agrees with the position we have taken, that it was the same as the visits brought to view in *Galatians 2*, she says (page 64) they felt “that if the restrictions and ceremonies of the Jewish law were not made obligatory upon their accepting the faith of Christ, the national peculiarities of the Jews, which kept them distinct from all other people, would finally disappear from among those who embraced the gospel truths.” Here we see the true cause of their feelings again as we have many times stated. On page 195 she shows how this same feeling existed: “Paul in his preaching at Corinth, presented the same arguments which he urged so forcibly in his epistles. His strong statement, ‘There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision,’ was regarded by his enemies as daring blasphemy. They determined that his voice should be silenced.”*LBG 82.3*

(A similar expression occurs in this very epistle to the Galatians.)*LBG 83.1*

On page 210, in speaking of his standing before the brethren at Jerusalem when he presented his gifts, and made his remarks, she says: "He could not recount his experience in Galatia without stating the difficulties he had encountered from those Judaizing teachers, who had attempted to misrepresent his teachings and pervert his converts." Here she evidently has in view the epistle to the Galatians. This she indicates caused some feelings. On page 212 she says that the advice given by James to recognize the ceremonial law by going before the priests, as we have stated, "was not consistent with that decision [of the Council of *Acts 15*] which had also been sanctioned by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God did not prompt this advice. It was the fruit of cowardice. By non-conformity to the, ceremonial law, Christians would bring upon themselves the hatred of the unbelieving Jews, and expose themselves to severe persecution." *LBG 83.2*

Page 213: "The disciples themselves yet cherished a regard for the ceremonial law, and were too willing to make concessions, hoping by so doing to gain the confidence of their countrymen, remove their prejudice, and win them to faith in Christ as the world's Redeemer. Paul's great object in visiting Jerusalem was to conciliate the church of Palestine. So long as they continued to cherish prejudice, they were constantly working to counteract his influence. He felt that if he could by any lawful concession on his part win them to the truth, he would remove a very great obstacle to the success of the gospel in other places. But he was not authorized of God to concede so much as they had asked. This concession was not in harmony with his teachings, nor with the firm integrity of his character." *LBG 83.3*

Page 214: "When we consider Paul's great desire to be in harmony with his brethren, his tenderness of spirit toward the weak in faith, his reverence for the apostles, who had been with Christ, and for James the brother of the Lord, and his purpose to become all things to all men as far as he could do this and not sacrifice principle,—when we consider all this, it is less surprising that he was constrained to deviate from his firm, decided course of action. But instead of accomplishing the desired object, these efforts to conciliation only precipitated the crisis, hastened the predicted sufferings of Paul, separated him from his brethren in his labors,

deprived the church of one of its strongest pillars, and brought sorrow to Christian hearts in every land.” Many other expressions could be quoted to the same effect; but we should despair of being able to show how important this subject was regarded among the early church, if what we have presented does not clearly prove it.*LBG 83.4*

We will only notice the remaining references to circumcision in the sixth chapter. Evidently Paul had finished his long argument, and was now giving the most precious Christian instruction for the benefit of the believers: but it seems that he cannot get this subject out of his mind. “As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.” There he shows how preaching the gospel *with* circumcision released one from persecution; but to preach the gospel without circumcision, not acknowledging its claim, brought persecuting elements upon him from every quarter. But *he* would rather preach the truth of God in its purity, whether persecuted or not. Circumcision saved no one, and uncircumcision saved no one; but there must be a new creature in Christ Jesus. Thus we see, from the beginning of the epistle to the end, this is the great theme that the apostle has in mind.*LBG 84.1*

We now leave the subject with the reader, claiming for our view that it makes one connected, consistent, harmonious argument throughout. The conclusions are all consistent with the premises. We have shown that there was a sufficient issue to demand such an argument; hence we conclude that the apostle has the ceremonial law mainly in view throughout this letter. Our brethren, with their position, though they may present quite an argument upon some detached passages of scripture, utterly fail to present that harmonious, systematic view of the whole epistle found in the position we have herein advocated, while there are many references throughout the epistle which utterly forbid their application of it to the moral law.*LBG 84.2*

This question which has long been in agitation among us is most unfortunate. As our brethren have presented their views in such a public manner, in a way which we cannot think is proper or consistent, we have felt it duty to present our view of the subject

before our leading brethren. Yet we feel the same brotherly feeling as ever toward those who differ with us, believing they have been misled in regard to their duty. We ask our leading brethren to consider the points of this argument carefully, and weigh it well. We leave the result with them and God.*LBG 85.1*

Battle Creek, Mich.,
Nov. 18, 1886

